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by

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in English in the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley

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Abstract

Sentimental Poetry of the American Civil War

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Doctorate of Philosophy in English

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In her book *The Imagined Civil War*, Alice Fahs makes a compelling case that Daniel Aaron's seminal claim about the Civil War --- that it was unwritten in every meaningful sense --- misses the point, and, in so doing, looks in the wrong places. Fahs, along with Kathleen Diffley, claims that the American Civil War was very much written, even overwritten, if you look in the many long-overlooked popular periodicals of the war years. I will take Fahs's and Diffley's claims and push them farther, claiming that the Civil War was imaginatively inscribed as a written war in many of its popular poems and songs. This imagined war, or the war as imagined through its popular verse, is a war that is inscribed and circumscribed within images of bounded text and fiction making, and therefore also within issues of authorship, authority, sure knowledge, and the bonds of sentiment. I will look closely at some of what I consider to be the more interesting topoi found in these war poems in order to think through what is being said and why in this huge amount of understudied and underread material. A number of critics have charged that American sentimental writing of the nineteenth century utterly elided the Civil War (*Godey's Lady's Book*'s failure to mention the war even once is held up as the most prominent example of this lacuna). I am proposing that, more than mention the Civil War, these popular sentimental poems made it a text to be bound and read again and again.

I submit that not only was the war exceedingly written, it was very often written with writing explicitly in mind, with tropes of reading and writing playing a large part in the imagery of these poems. These popular, anonymous, and forgotten poems image forth the war as a readable text, using highly text-based images (letters sent home, letters found on dead soldiers' bodies, casualty lists read aloud, "unjustified" injured bodies, epitaphs,
engraven hearts, bloody feet leaving lines to be read on the land), and, after the war, anthologist after anthologist claims in prefatory material to be making meaning of the war through making a book of the war's poems. I will show how this war was not only written, but written in such a way as to make the war and its sacrificed bodies texts themselves, texts that would be deployed postwar in an effort at reconciliation and bonding through rereading.

I will look at ways the mode of sentimentality intersects with war concerns, with the new concerns of this war (e.g., ways of getting and reading news, ways of memorializing the dead who die and are buried far from home, ways of being on the home front, ways the land absorbs bodies, ways bound books can bind their readers together as citizens). The violence of war is sentimentalized and domesticated in these popular poems. Violence (toward bodies, toward the land, and toward comforting notions of family and country) actually becomes a text (something bound, contained, codified, and interpretable). The radical upheaval and violence of the war becomes a poem, and within the poems the violence becomes letters, lists, lines on the land, and bodies that can be read and (re)traced. This verse made meaning of the war by translating the inexplicability of war into bounded and (largely) explicable texts.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Elsie Trapp and Marjorie Albright --- two amazing women who have always shown me both the joy of hard work and the value of a good laugh.
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I am grateful to Professor Elizabeth Young for sparking this project in a thoughtful email exchange.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my advisor, Professor Mitchell Breitweiser, who steered me toward many avenues of inquiry I would not have thought to look for on my own. This dissertation benefited greatly from his sound advice and thought-provoking questions. I would like to thank Professor Dorri Beam and Professor David Henkin for helping me to tighten some parts of my argument, while offering suggestions to expand other parts.

The work for this dissertation began in earnest when I learned of the looming deadline of the birth of my daughter, Violet, and the end came more sharply into view once I learned of my daughter Trudy’s imminent arrival. I want to thank both my daughters for providing me with the impetus of natural deadlines, and, more importantly, I want to thank them for arriving and being the fascinating, funny, fetching, and amazing people they are. If it were not for them I would not have started or finished this dissertation with such zeal, and they have given me the perspective to see that this work is important, and at the same time very happily unimportant.

I want to thank my husband, Seth, for making everything I do possible. I quite simply would never have been able to do this without him, and I cannot think of enough words or ways to thank him. I am incredibly lucky to know such a kind, generous, smart, helpful, encouraging, supportive, and understanding person. Thank you for everything, and then some, Seth.
Introduction: The Bonds of Sentiment and Civil War Poetry

In her book *The Imagined Civil War*, Alice Fahs makes a compelling case that Daniel Aaron's seminal claim about the American Civil War --- that it was unwritten in every meaningful sense --- misses the point, and, in so doing, looks in the wrong places. She writes,

> The issue of the quality of Civil War literature has long troubled literary critics who have written about the war. Although the idea that the war produced no "great" literature first appeared during the war itself, it has also haunted twentieth-century appraisals of Civil War literature. Edmund Wilson, for instance, spoke of the "mediocre level of the poetry of the Civil War," complaining that the war drove "into virtual hiding the more personal kind of self-expression which had nothing to do with politics or battles, which was not concocted for any market and which, reflecting the idiosyncracies of the writer, was likely to take on an unconventional form." Applying modernist aesthetic standards to war poems, Wilson almost inevitably found them lacking. Daniel Aaron, too, commented that though "one would expect writers, the 'antennae of the race,' to say something revealing about the meaning, if not the causes, of the War," with "a few notable exceptions, they did not." Yet looked at from a different set of angles, popular war literature is revelatory....Its existence...reminds us that the Civil War took place within a larger Victorian culture, both North and South, which valued poetry as part of significant public events. (15)

Those who would claim that America's Civil War produced no great literature have been doing so since the war itself. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his 1865 lecture "The Poetry of the War," begins his remarks by defending himself against all the war literature's critics: "I have announced my subject as The Poetry of the War....Now there may be those who would save me all trouble by the assertion that there has been no real poetry produced during the war. I hope to convince you that there has been a great deal of good readable verse, and some genuine poetry written during the past four years, under the inspiration of the times through which we have passed." That the Civil War was a barren, uninspiring time for literary output is a critical chestnut that seems to have been accepted without question since the years of the war itself. Yet the poems of the war, according to Holmes, were indeed good, as well as written in abundance: "They were written by soldiers, by the wives, sisters, parents, children, friends of soldiers. Many of them tremble with emotion, and the paper that held them was blistered with tears."

Fahs, along with Kathleen Diffley, claims that the American Civil War was very much written, even overwritten, if you look in the many long-overlooked popular periodicals of the war years. As Diffley writes, "The guns that opened on Fort Sumter have echoed for historians since April 1861, when South Carolina rebelled and the Civil
War began. For literary critics, however, those first reverberations have long been so faint that the Civil War has seemed largely 'unwritten.' (Where My Heart Is Turning Ever xi) Diffley looks at long-unread popular magazine stories written during the war to make the point that the American Civil War was indeed meaningfully written. She writes, "Contemporary writers were not, however, silent about the crisis....At issue is the assumption that the Civil War imaginatively vanished, that the tensions it released were suppressed or ignored by contemporary writers and the publishing industry they fueled." (xii)

I will take Fahs's and Diffley's claims and push them farther, claiming that the Civil War was imaginatively inscribed as a written war in many of its popular poems and songs. This war was written and rewritten, imagined and reimagined, in thousands of popular poems of the era. The countless columns of popular poems in the newspapers, broadsides, and magazines of the period tell a compelling story of the war that no critic has fully acknowledged. This imagined war, or the war as imagined through its popular verse, is a war that is inscribed and circumscribed within images of bounded text and fiction making, and therefore also within issues of authorship, authority, sure knowledge, and the bonds of sentiment. As I will argue, the popular poems of the Civil War repeatedly imagine this as a war of and about words; they portray the war itself as the ultimate sentimental poem.

Fahs and Diffley, as well as Faith Barrett, Eliza Richards, and others, have opened up the field of popular literature written during the Civil War years, and it is clear that many Americans, both amateur (the hundreds of nameless writers) and professional (Whitman, Melville, Dickinson, Holmes, Longfellow, Piatt, and others), chose to respond to an overwhelming national crisis by producing a truly overwhelming amount of creative material.1 The apparent enormous appeal of these poems (most every magazine and newspaper had a poets' corner, and there has been a steady stream of war poem anthologies issued for decades) speaks to their importance. These poems may have helped to both shape and reflect a certain perspective on the war and its effects, and I propose in my dissertation to look closely at some of what I consider to be the more interesting topoi found in the poems in order to think through what is being said and why in this huge amount of understudied and underread material.

The seeming generic quality of many of these sentimental poems (and the fact that so many of the images and tropes, and even entire poems, can be found repeatedly in both Northern and Southern publications) obscures their very real pathos and profundity. As Holmes writes in his lecture, "It is a misfortune of popular songs that they spoil their own effect by constant repetition. These ballads and sentimental pieces which are numbered by the thousands, --- 'Mother Kissed Me in My Dream' is marked 1201 --- which are pinned up by the hundred dead walls and piled up by the gross on counters --- which have been dinned in our ears by all manner of voices until they have made spots on our ear-drums like those the drumsticks make on the drum-head, --- do not get the credit they often deserve. There is a genuine and simple pathos in many of them. I do not know whether it sounds scholarly and critical and all the rest, but I think there is more nature and feeling in some of these mother-songs than in very many poems of far

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1 As Fahs reminds us, we need to adopt "...a wider understanding of the war as a literary event: far from literature being separate from the experience of the war, it was accepted as an appropriate, expected, and often deeply felt part of that experience." (4)
higher pretensions and more distinguished origin." As Holmes notes, these sentimental war poems, despite hammering home their repeated and repeatable images, are actually heartfelt, filled with "nature and feeling." Sentimental war verse does not get the credit it deserves, according to Holmes. That these songs and poems are seemingly constantly repeated everywhere is what, per Holmes, takes away from the feeling of genuine pathos that they contain if one could truly hear them. The multitude of late-war sentimental verse about dying soldiers can be read, as I will argue, as more than mere sentiment --- these popular poems tell us much about war, representation, and this era's ideas about reading and nation.

Sentimental poems, both then and now, have had their share of detractors, those who complain that the poems are more formal than honest, that they are more invested in gentility and careful craft that can be repeated than in expressing genuine feeling. As Samuels explains, "The discomfort of sentimentality comes from what can be a coerced or artifactual emotional response --- being forced to feel what it feels like --- a response that raises questions about the moral or political status of the works, or produces an uneasiness regarding what borders on the prurient or salacious aspects of the texts' subjects." (The Culture of Sentiment)

"Being forced to feel what it feels like" is a key concern, both in terms of the policing as well as bodily issues within sentimentality in general, and in these war poems in particular. The poems are often about "...death and its translation into printed form," as Faust writes. ("The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying" 20) As I will show in this dissertation, the popular Civil War poems are very often concerned with "dead" words and "live" outpourings. Yet these "dead" words, and the dead soldiers they synecdochically represent, are revived each time they are read or sung. The poems imagine that the dead bodies are --- as living, read poems --- brought back to life, offering a complex way to view sentiment's concern with moving you bodily --- with forcing you to feel what it feels like --- as well as how sentiment might be seen as false or formal while being in fact more nuanced in its approach to narrative, authority, and the bonds of reading.

As I will argue in my dissertation's conclusion, rereading these war poems was meant to evoke reunifying tears, and the poems themselves consciously mingle text and body. The sentimental war poems make much of their "live" quality, both in that they are meant to be read as live dispatches from the battlefield, and also in that reading the poems is meant to provoke a live, bodily response. Though highly formal and contained, sentimental poems work to move you bodily, to reach out to you, which some have read as a policing, as a way of coercing readers to feel a certain way. The war poems I will look at toy with these issues, compelling us to question when poems are crafted and when they are unmediated outpourings, when we are meant to feel connected and when we are meant to step back and see the obvious fictiveness of their "live from the field" or "writing while dying" claims.

There has been much recent work done on nineteenth-century American sentimentality, and this work has opened up new ways of thinking about this once hugely popular form. Kete has produced a new understanding of the term "sentimental" itself:

The large set of literary and nonliterary practices covered by the term "sentimental" are too vaguely explained as an appeal to the
emotions over reason; sentimentality amounted to a poetics --- a formal set of rules and strategies governing what could be said, by whom, to whom, and in what way. This poetics, I have argued, was especially dominant (if not hegemonic) in America throughout the first half of the nineteenth century for two reasons: one has to do with the way that the formal characteristics of American sentimentality took shape as part of a widely shared attempt to find solutions to the problems of grief and loss; the other has to do with the way these formal aspects contributed to the creation of the parameters of the American middle class. In particular, sentimentality allowed for the collaborative production of a concept of self and of nation that was both particular and corporate. Through the ostensibly private and personal processes of converting grief into mourning --- the experience of anomic into an experience of socialization and of spiritual skepticism into certainty --- many individuals whose gender and economic status otherwise limited their claim to "Americanness" were able to define collaboratively the ground of "American" subjectivity. (147)

As Kete asserts, sentimentality in nineteenth-century America was essentially a way to manage and represent mourning, a claim that makes sentiment's place in war poems all the more interesting. Kete argues that American sentimentality in this era brought a concept of self into alignment with a new notion of nation, a sense of nation that revolves around grief and mourning, all of which speaks to my dissertation's conclusion, where I argue that this war poetry, as it is anthologized postwar, is offered as a way to reread and contain grief in a bound book that will bind together the recently war-torn, mourning nation.

Richards rethinks the assumption that sentimental images were generic or trite, writing that instead, "...those feelings were coded as both deeply personal and fully generic." (Gender and the Poetics of Reception in Poe's Circle 16) Richards maps out a critical terrain where sentimentality has been derided and then applauded, writing, "These oscillations between apologies for the unconvincing quality of this body of work and celebrations of deeply authentic revelations of true feeling will be familiar to anyone following the recent efflorescence of critical literature on emotion, and particularly on sentimentalism, a word that, as Janet Todd explains, simultaneously evokes sincerity and duplicity...." (24) Yet, according to Richards, as well as other recent critics, sentimental poems were "...expressive because of rather than in spite of their conventionality...." (18)

Richards's examination of the women writers in Poe's era can also be read in terms of the later popular Civil War poets and poetry. She writes, "At the same time that the poetess is held up as the standard of confessional authenticity, however, she is reviled for the derivative qualities of her verse. For these women wrote of the most personal pain in the most conventional forms and the most common media....And why do poems expressing personal sentiments bear such a strong stamp of generic similitude?" (23) Just as Richards notes in regards to a slightly earlier era, the popular Civil War poems I will look at appear at first glance to be derivative and repetitive, yet, as I will show, these
poems in fact use their seemingly predictable images to convey powerful ideas about
reading, words' failure in the face of loss, war, death, and human connections.

I will look at ways the mode of sentimentality intersects with war concerns, with
the new concerns of this war (e.g., ways of getting and reading news, ways of
memorializing the dead who die and are buried far from home, ways of being on the
home front, ways the land absorbs bodies, ways bound books can bind their readers
together as citizens). In looking at popular Civil War verse, I want to address issues and
concerns that these poems both created and helped to reimagine. I want to ask how these
sentimental poems and songs made meaning of a felt war. Their intricate, layered
representations of textuality give the lie to common assumptions that sentimental
literature is univocal, unlayered, and predictable.

According to much of its popular poetry, the Civil War could both be known and
at the same time never known through reading, through text. Shirley Samuels likens the
Civil War to a palimpsest, since there are no blank, uninscribed spaces left on which to
write about it: "To make blank a place such as the Civil War, which has so much already
written upon it, is fundamentally impossible." (Facing America 7) This is a telling image,
since, as I see it, these popular Civil War poems are so invested in making the war into a
text that Civil War poetry itself can be read as a palimpsest, where writing, and ideas of
reading and writing, are written all over and through these poems. The popular war verse
makes the war a palimpsest, an overwritten war. Throughout these poems, the land is a
text to be read, dead bodies are texts to be read, empty sleeves and missing limbs are
texts to be read, casualty lists are texts to be read, and, in the end, all these poems
detailing these things are texts to be read. One might argue that verse is a creative act of
writing, so having writing and the evocative power of language --- as well as, conversely,
words' failure to articulate --- be of central concern within a poem should come as no
surprise. But the way these poems comment on war, death, nationhood, narrative,
sentimental bonds, and words is particularly interesting to me.

An "Inadvertent Epic"

What do poetic conventions bring to the depiction of war, violence, and bodily
injury? In other words, why look at poetry in this study? Richards reminds us of the place
of poetry in this period: "In contrast to the novel, lyric was associated with the capacity
for unmediated personal expression. Its brevity also lent it a superior ability to circulate
broadly through epistolary and print networks." (Gender and the Poetics of Reception in
Poe's Circle 6) Poems, as opposed to novels, were able to be read and then passed on
more rapidly through the warring nation. Indeed, as Richards goes on to detail, "Though
the novel has long held a central place in American literary and cultural studies, it is less
often noted that 'the mid-century was the great era of poetry,' characterized by a massive
circulation of lyric that constituted a full-blown economy of emotional exchange. More
novels may have been printed in book form, but poems, because of their compactness,
were more adaptable for publication in rapidly multiplying ephemeral print media." (11)

Poems were in essence everywhere during this war. In contrast to the bound (and
avowedly bounded) anthologies that I will talk about in this dissertation's conclusion, the
popular presses where the war poems were originally published are marked by their
unbound quality. In reading through the newspapers and magazines of the war era, one is
struck by the mix of items and issues thrown together --- death notices and lists of the wounded abut odes to spring; poems on dead infants in their cradles and ads for "Whit's Vegetable Extract for the Hair" surround poems full of images of carnage allegedly written by soldiers in the field. And though a war is taking place, not all, or even most, of the poems in the newspapers and magazines of the period acknowledge there is a war at all. What then is the place of poetry in the context of war? What is it doing in column after column of everyday news, war stories, battle "incidents," and fashion advice? And, in turn, what do the supposedly "live" news poems tell us in the context of actual news? In the dense jumble on each page of the paper or magazine, the poets' corners look almost like reprieves, like "light" reading, in martial columns, next to near black masses of type detailing all kinds of other minutiae of life during the war.

One might ask, Why home in on periodical poetry of the war? What about periodical war poetry warrants a standalone study? Why is looking at this popular poetry valuable? Why write on this as opposed to the novels of the war, diaries of the war, etc.? The trauma of this war "posed special problems for cultural forms such as poetry," (Lee Rust Brown xii) as well as highlighting the limits of representation in general. In both Where My Heart Is Turning Ever and To Live and Die, Diffley addresses why she has chosen to focus on periodical writing. She explains how magazines and newspapers in mid-nineteenth-century America were such a new and vital medium that they were uniquely poised to capture this war in a way no other media were. I want to take her observations about the popular periodical short story and apply them to the poetry of the popular presses. Periodical poetry was very much part of the public sphere. This poetry was often unsigned or anonymous, poems and songs are often in conversation with each other, and many voices collaborate and contribute to this "inadvertent epic" (to borrow Leslie Fiedler's term), allowing verse to offer an exciting and evocative glimpse into popular sentiment about the war and about writing's place within sentimentalism and the war.

In this dissertation I will look at a relatively small section of sentimental Civil War verse, which is part of a mind-bogglingly large amount of published popular war poetry. I have read as many of the thousands of poems and broadsides as I could unearth, knowing that there are many more poems out there waiting to be (re)read. (I actually had a difficult time knowing when to stop looking for poems and instead start writing about them, as there are so many waiting to be rediscovered.) I will look closely at verse circulating in the popular press during the years of the war (i.e., broadsides and newspaper and magazine poems from 1861 to 1865), and then I will look at verse published in the more mediated genre of the anthology (these anthologies were issued fairly regularly after the war for decades --- at least five have been published in the last ten years alone).

In looking at these hundreds of poems that reflect popular taste and concerns at the time of the war and after, I have chosen to narrow my scope to a certain set of topoi I saw appear and reappear, across the years, across publications, and across warring sections. Textualizing tropes and images that translate the violence of war to words come up in poem after poem both in the North and the South. These images defy region and seem to defy or transcend sectional loyalties, instead speaking to a larger national concern with meaning making and sentimental bonding during a time of sectional strife and then reconciliation. These sentimental tropes about reading and mourning and bonds
effortlessly shuttle between Southern and Northern publications. It is striking that we can see this kind of a national poetics at work during a time of civil strife. The poems I will look at are not clearly marked as Northern or Southern (and in fact many of them were published, without attribution, or with contested attribution, in both Union and Confederate periodicals), and the same tropes and metaphors easily traverse both sections of the warring nation.

Diffley cites Leslie Fiedler's notion of a popular, collective, and collaborative "inadvertent epic" when she describes the popular magazine prose of the Civil War. Diffley counterposes Daniel Aaron's claims with Fiedler's:

What [Aaron] lamented, however, was the absence of a transcendent American masterpiece....[i]n his turn, Fiedler proposed an "inadvertent epic"....His effort to recognize history's rumble in the groundswell of popular texts missed wartime responses, to be sure, but the resulting genre was boldly domestic, polyvocal, and engaged in tackling race head-on....[a]nd yet even his [Fiedler's] synthetic approach neglected the one right place for discovering what many Americans imagined while cannon were still hot and losses were piling up, the one right place for unearthing the alarms, misgivings, and settling purposes of wartime life, the one right place that Stowe herself sought once Uncle Tom's Cabin was underway: namely, midcentury magazines. (To Live and Die 2)

I am arguing that the vast outpouring of popular periodical Civil War poems can be read as a genre unto itself, an inadvertent epic that writes the war and writes through the war. Aside from looking at poems individually, I want to look at what they can tell us if read as a whole --- what these popular poems tell us of a particular perspective on wartime ideas of death, mourning, sentimental bonds, reading, writing, and memory in nineteenth-century America. Read together, what can this tremendous outpouring of popular sentimental war poetry tell us about the nation, about race, about memory and memorial?

Although I propose to look at a certain textual imagery that I see in many of the war poems, any notion of reading them together ignores the fact that the poems I will look at have been plucked out of their original, untidy contexts. Looking at the poems within the welter of the magazine and newspaper worlds in which they were originally published would also make a very interesting study. Reading the poems in conversation with the engravings and photographs that were published near them originally, or the ads that were published hand-in-hand with them, as well as reading the anthologies with their original back material and promotional ads, and the broadsides with their elaborate illustrations and vignettes, would make a rich study. Given the constraints of this project, I will have to put aside the enormous amount of visual material that was published alongside the poems --- the fascinating engravings, illustrations, ads, and photos that also tell us much about how the poems might have been read, and hence how the war might have been read as a text. I hope to one day expand this study to include much of this
visual material, which offers interesting commentary on my claim that this was a very written and text-oriented poetry.

Though not clearly marked as Union or Confederate, these poems, and most all of the periodical poetry from the Civil War, are very clearly marked as white. The poems evidence white concerns, and there is almost no mention of blacks at all in either section's mainstream poetry. Indeed, most of the popular Civil War verse I found bypasses the question of slavery or states' rights entirely. As the Harper's Weekly poem "Songs of the Army," 27 August 1864, puts it,

The negro --- free or slave ---
We care no pin about,
But for the flag our fathers gave
We mean to fight it out.

Slavery is rarely, if ever, represented, or even alluded to, in these poems (though, in a twisted logic, many Confederate poems liken the South's position vis-a-vis the North to that of a slave; in addition, the bonds of sentiment take on an added valence when read in light of the bonds of slavery, which I will talk more about below). Rather, the poems I will look at here are painfully and painstakingly aware of one thing only: dead white soldiers and their loved ones. The white, sentimental poems that I did find in abundance are indicative of what popular sentiment saw the war as being about: It was not about slaves or slavery, but about white soldiers, their deaths, and middle-class sentimental, domestic responses to war. In her largely positive review of Fahs's and Diffley's books on popular Civil War genres, "US Civil War Print Culture and Popular Imagination," Richards proposes that someone redirect their initial inquiries into black presses and abolitionist presses. After laying the groundwork in this dissertation, I hope in a future study to compare what I find here to what can be found in the emergence of black newspapers and in moments when black-authored poetry does address the war.

During this war, in nineteenth-century America, it was common for poetry to be used as commemoration, as consolation (witness all the Decoration Day odes, the Lincoln eulogies, the countless songs about vacant chairs and missing men, etc.), yet what I want to examine in this poetry goes beyond that. In these numberless poems, we see how many, many people made sense of the war and its costs, its upheaval, its deaths, through writing, through reading, again showing us how this was a war in and of words.

Poetry can be seen as a way of measuring grief, as a vehicle for making grief fit to be consumed, making it fit into neat rows and rhymes. As Max Cavitch reminds us, poetry is about keeping watch and measuring; he writes of "...the formally exaggerated vigilance of the metrical line (poetry actively displays its competence to measure)...." (29) All this sentimental war verse binds grief into a poem, and then later into a book in the anthologies, just as a war wound can be bound by a medic. These regular, uniform sentimental war poems fit the unbounded horrors and unanswered questions of war death into a very bound, portable, measured art.

Though this war produced a seemingly endless amount of poems on the dying soldier, it is important to note that this type of poem did not originate with the war. Rather, I hope in this dissertation to show how the war poets took what had been a stock
sentimental trope and made of it a wholly new thing --- in other words, I want to look at what this war did to sentimentalism's concerns. That these are not new images for this war is made clear by Mark Schantz. Schantz reminds us of the precursors to the Civil War's dying soldier poems:

In several important respects, the poem "The Dying Words of Little Celia" adumbrated standard features of the "dying soldier" poetry that emerged during the Civil War. Both forms of poetry gestured forthrightly toward eternal life; both invoked loved ones (either mothers or sweethearts); both frequently cited what were reported as the "last words" of the dying; both endowed the dying with a strong sense of the acceptance of their fate. "All of these were considered appropriate deathbed or dying thoughts," writes Alice Fahs, "and they were reiterated in numerous poems during the war." In such ways did the sentimental poetry of the antebellum era provide the Civil War generation with an imaginative template with which to deal with the suffering unleashed by mass warfare. Although the scale of the carnage unleashed in the Civil War was unprecedented, Americans seemed able and willing to package that suffering in literary forms that they had learned well in the years leading up to the conflict. (105--106)

As I will argue, taking a page from Schantz, prewar sentimentalism allowed the war's unprecedented numbers of dead to be packaged, bound, portable and palatable --- in effect, it allowed the war dead to be read within familiar tropes, translating them to text. Sentimentalism contained war's horrors and grief within the bounds of learned and accepted literary customs. The violence of war is sentimentalized and domesticated in these popular poems. Violence (toward bodies, toward the land, and toward comforting notions of family and country) actually becomes a text (something bound, contained, codified, and interpretable). The radical upheaval and violence of the war becomes a poem, and within the poems the violence becomes letters, lists, lines on the land, and bodies that can be read and (re)traced. I am claiming that sentimental war verse and its anthologizers give bounds to war, they make it containable. It is not so much that the sentimental images I see repeated so often in these war poems are new, rather, it is how these poetic conventions are changed or inflected by the war that I find compelling. I hope to show not that these images are unique to Civil War poetry, or even that Civil War--era poetry was only and always about these images; rather, it is the striking confluence of these sentimental images of affective bonds with the war and its concerns that I am interested in detailing. I want to look at the way this war was put, and not put, to words; the way text and trauma define each other during this sentimental, warring period.

A number of critics have charged that American sentimental writing of the nineteenth century utterly elided the Civil War (Godey's Lady's Book's failure to mention the war even once is held up as the most prominent example of this lacuna), and these critics in turn have elided the war from their discussions of sentimentality. I am
proposing that, more than mention the Civil War, the popular sentimental war poems made it a text to be bound, embalmed, and read again and again.

A Popular, Published War

Kathleen Diffley makes the case that popular magazines and newspapers were in a unique position during the war to bring their readers together in a time of disjoint and discord. She writes,

Even in older cities like the nation's capital, laid out before the turn of the century, the upheaval of the war severed commercial ties and transformed cultural life, most noticeably in opening the District to thousands of free blacks and newly emancipated slaves. For them as for those who defended the Confederacy or moved west, popular magazines provided an unusual forum for making historical crisis make sense, often in ways that publishing centers like Richmond and Philadelphia, New York and Boston, rarely foresaw. (Where My Heart Is Turning Ever xxxiv--xxxv)

She asserts that this ascendency of the popular press served to connect and bind readers on the battlefront as well as back at home: "...popular magazines during the Civil War and Reconstruction...[lay] claim...to the hearts and minds of readers in parlors and campgrounds alike." (xlv) Diffley claims that popular magazines were "[p]oised to turn readers into citizens on a national scale," (xlv) and that popular magazines and newspapers were "...caught between the wartime action they made meaningful and the reaction they helped to shape." (xlvii) And Fahs writes that popular war literature "...portrayed and helped to shape new modes of imagining individuals' relationships to the nation." (2)

The popular presses acted as a bond --- a way of binding --- between those newly separated --- between families at home and their faraway soldiers. The popular stories and poems that circulated in the magazines and newspapers helped to make sense of their readers' anxiety, readers who were most likely far from reported events. As Diffley claims, "...new weeklies and monthlies offered ways of seeing the war, in pictures and in prose, for growing numbers of subscribers who passed their pages along." (To Live and Die 1)

Fahs details just how prevalent these poems were in the popular press. Seemingly the entire nation, though at war, could be seen as united in one respect: in the writing and reading of war verse. According to Fahs's research, practically every literate person, North and South, was reading and writing poetry during the war: "Inspired by the war, for instance, numbers of ordinary citizens, both male and female, contributed a profusion of patriotic poetry to newspapers, a fact that many observers at the time found striking." (29) She goes on to claim that "...popular patriotic poetry was both an important indication and a creator of popular nationalism." (29) Fahs reminds us that "...numerous amateur and profesional poets responded to the outbreak of war in verse," (53) and, "As Oliver Wendell Holmes noted in 1865, war poems 'were written by soldiers, by the wives, sisters, parents, children, friends of soldiers,'" (64) and, "...Harper's
observed that 'the Poet's Columns in the newspapers [had] become almost as formidable as those of General Scott.' (53) Fahs details an era in which "Such public war poetry was part of a wider understanding of the war as a literary event: far from literature being separate from the experience of the war, it was accepted as an appropriate, expected, and often deeply felt part of that experience." (4) She goes on to note that "No other war in American history has had this profound sense of narrativity associated with it...." (311) This was a war very much about representation, about words that tell and do not tell, about the ways war can be said and not said.

Poets were seemingly everywhere during the war, and the poems they produced and consumed reflected this saturation of text. The war effort was imagined as, importantly, also a textual effort, as can be seen in this typical line from the poem "The Hour and the Cause" in Harper's Weekly, 18 July 1863, "This is the cause we plead to-day./With voice and pen and sword," where voice and pen are just as much war materiel as a sword. Text was imagined as being part and parcel of the war effort, so much so that, as Fahs points out, textual categories were used as a lens through which to view the war as a whole: "The organization of the Rebellion Record, with its sections titled 'Documents,' 'Poetry,' 'Rumors,' 'Incidents' and 'Anecdotes,' also revealed that from the start of the conflict authors and publishers conceptualized the war within familiar literary categories." (52)

This lens of textuality can be seen in many contexts. In his 1865 lecture, "The Poetry of the War," Oliver Wendell Holmes declares,

So we may, in a certain sense, call this whole war of freedom an acted poem, and find a melody as of some divine ode in each of its unnumbered deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice. A few volumes may hold all the lines and stanzas that have shaped themselves in words, but if every incident which inspires or touches our souls, if all that courage, patriotism, self-devotion have done could fitly sing themselves, it is hardly too much to say, in those simple-hearted words of the loving apostle, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

In Holmes, as in much of the verse of the Civil War era, we can see that war and text are conflated in interesting ways. Here the entire nation at war is "an acted poem." War's incidents of heroism and death are read as entirely textual, as "some divine ode." Indeed, Holmes imagines that, in addition to the war poems that were actually penned ("all the lines and stanzas that have shaped themselves in words"), there remain myriad acts and incidents of the war that, if they "could fitly sing themselves," would make a song or poem of the whole war experience, a verse that would be entirely out of bounds, that would not fit within the binding of every book that could be written. According to Holmes's striking image, it is not too much to say that all the war came together to make an ideal, impossible text.

After reading the vast number of popular Civil War poems that I did, it seems that all these thousands of poems and songs are almost a celebration of the war, a celebration of this trope of textuality. The many, many poems come to seem like one and the same sentimental poem published by the thousands. These poems seemingly make the war into
a single, repeatable sentimental poem itself, one that is bound by expected and consoling images and cadences. And as we can see in his lecture, this is indeed a war of words, in Holmes's view.

We see this again in Richard Grant White's Preface to his 1866 war poem anthology *Poetry Lyrical, Narrative and Satirical of the Civil War* when he writes,

> Whether we have reason to be proud or ashamed of the poetry produced by our civil war, --- most of it written by unpractised [sic] hands, --- it will be for each reader to decide for himself after perusal of this volume; but this I may venture to say from knowledge, that these poems being arranged in the order of time, the book tells the story of the war like a rhymed chronicle.

The war here is something that can be arranged chronologically into a book, something that can be made to fit into the confines and container of a bound book (an idea I will explore further in this dissertation's conclusion). According to White, the war is a story, a text, that can be put to words, and the words the war has been put to are the war's popular poems. Here, the book of war poems tells the story of the war, ensuring that we see the war as a textual event. Furthermore, this war as text is imagined to be an epic poem, "a rhymed chronicle." When all the war poems collected here are read together in the order presented, they make of the war a storied poem, a highly wrought text.

Sentimental poems and metaphors of text and textuality permeate this war, at least as it is imagined in the popular press. In the Holmes lecture, the war is a poem; the war is a written text waiting to be read, an acted poem waiting to be seen: "The first place in the list of the poets of the war is due to those who have acted their poems before they have sung them, who have written sword in hand, who have fought with songs on their lips," and fighting itself is imagined to be as much verse as battle:\(^2\): "So stood the two sections of the country, face to face, each with a sword in its hand, each with a song in its mouth." Sword in hand, song in mouth --- the war was as much battle as song, as much violence as verse. According to Holmes, textuality --- poetry --- was everywhere; the entire war was read and sung as a poem:

> Yet a few brief words remain to say of the poems of the war which took other shape than that of verse. There were the poems of action, written in the blood and the sweat of men; traced in sweet deeds of love and charity, --- boundless, never to be told any more than the drops of ocean will be counted --- by the soft hands of women. I find an unversified poem in the will of that brave General, who, falling at the head of his troops, left all he had to the country for which he had given his life. I find a poem in one single word, the word which melted all gentle hearts, when the message

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\(^2\) It is useful to note that the words verse and versus, or a turning, are related, especially when we recall that a war is about "this versus that" --- a war is about a turning or overturning, a versus, just as verse is a turning of words in or around form. This offers yet another angle from which to view war verse more generally.
went forth praying that the bodies of our soldiers, dead in battle, might be "tenderly" forwarded to their northern home.

Holmes presents a picture of a warring nation that is itself a poem, and he describes a war where everything, even beyond actual war verse, is a poem of war. For Holmes, bleeding soldiers are poems, dying generals are poems, and the news of dead soldiers is a poem. According to Holmes, the war as a poem is verse that is "boundless" --- verse that cannot be contained or told in text, while at the same time it is likened to text. That there was actual poetry everywhere during the war is one thing Holmes claims; he takes this claim farther and makes the point that all the war was itself a poem --- he translates and transcribes the entire warring nation into verse, while postulating that this verse of trauma is not a verse that is bound to words or to lines on a page. The lived war "took other shape than that of verse," yet it is a lived poem, lived lines ("written" and "traced") of embodied text.

As Fahs and Diffley have shown, periodical literature was part of a massive popular cultural outpouring during and after the war that sought to make sense of the war, to imagine and reimagine the war on paper, through writing, by writing through it. A compiler of popular war poems confirms this, writing at the time, "Perhaps no struggle in the world's history has given rise to such a profusion of soul-stirring song and immortal verse, as has this conflict of Right and Wrong, that has now raged these many months between the Northern and Southern sections of our unfortunate country. No history that shall be written of this terrible struggle will be quite complete that does not give appropriate space to the part the poets of our land have taken in stirring the popular heart." (Preface to Ledyard Bill's 1864 Pen-Pictures of the War) The American Civil War was suffused with text, and, according to Bill, the many war poems stirred the popular, reading heart while violence raged on the battlefield. This was imagined to be a war as much about text as it was about trauma.

**Reading Grief**

After reading thousands of (largely anonymous) poems published during the war in the many broadsides, newspapers, magazines, and anthologies of the period and after, I submit that not only was the war, as well as its grief, exceedingly written, it was often written with writing explicitly in mind, with tropes of reading and writing playing a large part in the imagery of these poems. This was an imagined war in verse that often thematized texts and textuality, presenting ways of reading and writing war in which the war and its bodies become written on many levels, both as the poem as well as within the poem. For example, a poem published in numerous periodicals, North and South, during the war is "No Letter," by Nemet, *Macon Daily Telegraph and Confederate*, 21 January 1865; it reads,

"No letter!" poor mother! oh well might thou weep,  
For thy noble and manly first-born  
Is now sleeping peacefully death's dreamless sleep;  
He shall never again see the morn.
"No letter!" and yet from his pocket they took,
   When they searched there to find out his name
A missive unfinished in his Holy Book,
   All hopeful of glory and fame.

"In battle to-day our flag I'll uphold
   And defend, though I loose [sic] my right arm;
I am young, I have strength, and with courage am bold,
   With my life I will shield it from harm.

"I must go, dear mother! I hear the drum call,
   And I will write more on the morrow."
Alas! ere that day closed, the enemy's ball
   To that mother bequeathed ceaseless sorrow.

"No letter!" and sadly the wife turned away,
   And crush'd in her heart the great pain,
As God gave her patience --- while day after day
   She sought for the letter in vain.

"No letter!" your children are fatherless now;
   Bow in meekness to God's stern decree,
Your husband, with laurel wreaths twin'd round his brow,
   Is at rest in the land of the free.

"No letter!" sweet maiden your lover so brave,
   To his heart clasped your image and fell.
Said he gloried to fill a poor soldier's grave
   For the country he loved so well.

To leave you alone was his only regret,
   In this sad world or sorrow and sin;
But your grief he was hopeful you soon would forget,
   And sighing for what might have been.

"No letter!" dear sister, your brother is dead:
   Alas! he was shot in the battle;
No sister's hand near to hold his cold head,
   With no one to hear the death rattle.

Only those who have writhed 'neath the heart-crushing thought,
   And who live upon hope's brittle thread,
Can know the sad trials with which life is fraught
   Brings the longing to be with the dead.

This poem's repeated lament, "No letter!", insists that we link text and mourning. We are
forced to contemplate repeatedly the image of many different mourning women left behind with "no letter," no consolation, while we readers of the poem find consolation in reading the poem, again a textual consolation. The poem makes much of the poignant image of "A missive unfinished," where a text represents death --- we know the soldier has died because his letter remains unfinished, stashed between the pages of his Bible (an image that further layers the context of textuality). We can again see how the poem highlights the relation of text to mourning when we read, "She sought for the letter in vain." Looking for an unsent letter is here a stand-in or representation for announcing a death. Saying she looked for an unsent letter is akin to saying the soldier is dead; text and death are stand-ins, or bonds, for each other.

Reading and mourning are equated and conflated repeatedly in the war's popular poems. The following lines from "The Mother's Grief," by J. B. Swett, in Frank Leslie's Illustrated News, 16 December 1865, further this point:

No word, no line has my Johnnie sent
Since he went away from me,
And God only knows what a life I've spent,
Of doubting and misery.
The war! the war! 'tis a fearful thing!
O, how many hearts have bled ---
How dire are the sorrows its workings bring
On more than one mother's head?

All the fear, all the doubt, all the misery --- indeed, all the hearts at home that bleed --- are caused by lack of word, by lack of lines of text. Not receiving a letter from a loved soldier is likened to reading of his death. In fact, this might have been as true in the poems as it was for actual Americans living through the Civil War, as Drew Gilpin Faust alludes to: "More reliable and certainly more consoling than 'casualty' lists were the personal letters that custom required a dead soldier's closest friends and immediate military superiors to write to his relatives...." (This Republic of Suffering 106) All the anxious waiting of war, all the miserable suspense experienced by those at home in these poems, is wrapped up in text, in waiting for word, waiting for lines of text to cross between the boundaries of battle and home.

In "Only One Man Killed To-Day," by A. M. L., in Harper's Weekly, 14 February 1863, grief is told through reading. A soldier's death and his family's reaction become an imagined public event, a reading. The soldier's fate/name is read twofold: both in the poem and as a poem. Here, reading is being wounded, and reading is knowing. The poems make the war itself a text, indeed the ultimate sentimental text. According to these poems, newspapers, lists, letters, and telegrams --- that is, texts --- were the very sentimental bonds uniting battle and home. Reading is the bond that collapsed the boundaries between battle and home. As "Only One Man Killed To-Day" reads:

There are tears and sobs in the little brown house
On the hill-side slope to-day;
Though the sunlight gleams on the outer world
There the clouds drift cold and gray.
“Only one man killed,” so the tidings read—
“Our loss was trifling: we triumphed,” ’twas said—
And only here in the home on the hill
Did the words breathe aught but of triumph still.

They had watched and waited, had prayed and wept,
Those loving hearts by the cottage hearth,
And the hope was strong that their darling would walk
Unscathed and safe 'mid the battle's wrath.
They would gladly have shielded his life from ill,
But their trust was all in their Father's will;
They had felt so sure His love would save
The pride of their hearts from a soldier's grave.

Now His wisdom had ordered what most they feared,
And their hearts are crushed by the news to-day,
“Only one man killed”—so the telegram reads—
But for them life's beauty has passed away;
And all the glory and triumph gained
Seems a matter small to the woe blood-stained,
That in sorrowful strokes, like a tolling bell,
Throbs “Only one man killed,” as a funeral knell.

“Only one man killed”—so we read full oft,
And rejoice that the loss on our side was small;
Forgetting meanwhile that some loving heart
Felt all the force of that murderous ball.
“Only one man killed,” comes again and again:
One hero more 'mong the martyred slain:
“Only one man killed,” carries sorrow for life
To those whose darlings fall in the strife.

Here we read of war as a text, as a thing to be quoted, read, and reread: "'Only one man killed,' so the tidings read," "'And their hearts are crushed by the news to-day,' 'Only one man killed' --- so the telegram reads --- ." The war here is made textual, it is quoted secondhand. "[S]o the telegram reads" makes this translation to text explicit, showing us how much this war is a read war. The reading of a death, both for the characters in the poem, as well as for us when we read the excerpted refrain in quotes, "Only one man killed," is what brings grief. It seems that the life lost is not the focus so much here as the fact that it is rendered textually. The quoted refrain highlights this, causing us to repeatedly recall that this is a textual grief, a textual loss. This death is experienced entirely textually, both for the mourners in the poem as well as for us as readers of the poem. In contrast to the war's earlier, more jingoistic calls-to-arms poems, so many of these later, more sentimental poems are anguished waits. They detail families who only want their son to come home unharmed. They are not about sacrifice and country, but
more about personal (though generic and repeatable, as Cavitch argues) fear, loss, and mourning. Loss here is made textual, made readable and therefore rereadable.

Farther on in "Only One Man Killed To-Day," war wounding and reading are conflated, as can be seen in the lines "'Only one man killed'—so we read full oft,/And rejoice that the loss on our side was small;/Forgetting meanwhile that some loving heart/Felt all the force of that murderous ball." The ambiguity of these lines makes it clear that reading is wounding. Reading is just as much of a physical wounding as a shot on the field would be. Those who read the quoted lines, the refrain of the poem, "'Only one man killed,'" are wounded just as grievously as the soldiers on the field who feel the force of the original shot. Reading here is part of the war in a visceral sense.

War and text are repeatedly conflated in these poems, so much so that text itself seems imbrued with the blood of battle, as can be seen in these lines from "Sonnet," by George H. Boker, from *Poetry Lyrical, Narrative, and Satirical of the Civil War*: "Blood, blood! the lines of every printed sheet/Through their dark arteries reek with running gore." Wounded and dead soldiers' bodies are conveyed textually, and the text itself is figured as a bloodied, wounded body of war that appears to be read everywhere ("the lines of every printed sheet"). Text and corporal wounding are intertwined. Lines of poetry are imagined as integral parts of the war wounds, of the war itself. Reading and wounding come to the the same thing in these popular war poems.

Many of these poems imagine a reading of loss, and then we read these poems about this read loss. The following stanza in the poem "The Battle Rainbow," by John R. Thompson, in *War Poetry of the South*, points to how very woven this war was with text, at least as imagined in the popular poetry:

Then a long week of glory and agony came ---
   Of mute supplication, and yearning, and dread;
When day unto day gave the record of fame,
   And night unto night gave the list of its dead.

We see that this war, as imagined in these poems, is intricately bound to text. The war in these lines is bracketed by text: "When day unto day gave the record of fame,/And night unto night gave the list of its dead," where each day of war ends in a record, and each night ends in a list. Text, in the form of records and lists, is the very quotidian stuff of this war. There is text at the beginning and the end of each day and night of war. Text --- lists, records, accounts, countings --- is what gives shape, gives boundaries, gives definition to the war. According to these poems, text is what begins and ends this war, as well as what gives it meaning, makes it legible and interpretable.

The mingling of war and text can be seen in more than just the poetry of the era. This connection also appears in the popular magazine illustrations, as well as printed broadside vignettes and engravings, one of which is "The Soldier's Dream of Home," by Currier and Ives, 1862, which imagines a casual parallel between war and text, between war grief, war text, and war weapons. The engraving shows a soldier's letters, his texts, side by side with his war weapon, all of which seem to have inspired a dream of, and mourning for, home:
Poems about lists of the dead and wounded, and about letters to and from soldiers, are clearly textually oriented. For example, in these lines from *Harper's Weekly*'s poem "Barbarism," 24 December 1864,

O sickening record! most pathetic page
That fills the blood-stained volume of our years!

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Reading, what woeful visions fill my eyes,

we read about reading of the war, about reading the pages from the sanitary commission. This war poem details the act of reading, it presents this war's image of read, textual ways of getting war news. Reading here is incorporated, it is taken into the body: "O sickening record!" Reading here produces bodily ailments, just as a war wound would.

This notion of reading the war, of war as a text, is complicated by some poems and illustrations that mock those who would only experience the war through reading, through text. For example, the opening lines from *Harper's Weekly*'s poem "I Wouldn't -- Would You?," 23 August 1862, about reading the papers to mull over the war, deride the idea of war as a read thing:

Who doesn't now read the papers
More than ever he read before;
Eagerly watching the symptoms
Of our great political sore?
Some only to croak and grumble,
To sleep and loaf and chew,
Doing nothing to ease the smarting;
I wouldn't do that --- would you?

Here reading text is akin to a medical observation of the body politic, the abscessed body of the warring nation. The body of the nation is monitored textually. Reading is a watching ("Who doesn't now read the papers/.../Eagerly watching the symptoms/Of our great political sore?") , a way to sit apart from the fighting, merely to "croak and grumble." Reading is a passive mixture of text and bodily observation, and the poem suggests that this kind of readerly response is a failed response, a response worthy of derision. The poem compares reading to "true" patriotism, a comparison in which reading the text of the nation, the text of war, falls short. During this war, text and trauma --- words and violence --- inflect and reflect each other in complex ways, and poets and anthologizers repeatedly negotiate the limits of war's words and representations.

Text and reading are compared unfavorably to patriotism graphically in the illustration for the American Broadsides and Ephemera Series I's broadside "Their Sham Shoulder-Straps," from 1864:

The poem here is about soldiers who do not live up to the name, soldiers who would rather preen and strut and gab than actually fight. While the text of the broadside details these sham soldiers in all their sundry poses and swagger, it never mentions them
reading, yet, for the illustration to the broadside, this is what the sham soldier is pictured doing. (And, interestingly, the sham soldier appears to be reading war news, ensuring that we see him reading about the war rather than fighting in the war.) It would seem that the acme of duplicity or doubleness in this imagined war is reading, according to the illustration, yet the poem the illustration is meant to picture forth never mentions reading. Reading and text here are an immediate, visual shorthand for falseness, for fakery, for pretension --- in short, for fiction.

Though meant to scorn the notion of reading the war, mocking the idea of this war as experienced textually, these examples from Harper's Weekly and the American Broadsides and Ephemera Series I, among others, serve to underscore just how pervasive the idea of text was in this war's image of itself in the popular press.

As we can see in this line from "Yes, My Boy..." in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War: "Yes, dear Son, I'm always sighing/Of what I in the papers read," the experience of this war is a very read, a very textual, experience, both for the characters in the poems, as well as for the readers of the poems. The entire warring, reading nation, Confederate and Union, is presented in these poems as bonded together through mourning, through sighing, all the while reading the newspaper together as a nation.

Bonds of affection and the bonds of reading are linked in the popular war poems, one example being the poem "My Captain Bend Low" published in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War, where a soldier is portrayed as dying alone, with no bonds of affection to surround him. This typical poem details the ways of getting this news that his family has, which turn out to be entirely textual, entirely read. The poem itself, a read text, is meant to bind the gap of time and space between the soldier and his faraway loved ones. In this sense, the read poem is the sentimental bond that will reunite the soldier with his family, the readers with the war, and even, according to the postwar anthologies, the warring sections of the nation with their newly reconciled foes. In these poems, loss and grief are inextricably bound with reading, both in the obvious sense of our reading about this imagined loss through reading the poems, but also in more surprising ways where the poems themselves recount and account for the imagined dead by textualizing them, by making them readable.

This war, as imagined in the popular war poetry, was a very authored war, a very read experience, reminding us of Benedict Anderson's argument about reading, the nation, and imagined communities. These poems can be read as part of the war effort itself, creating an imagined community of readers and rich text where war's carnage and the war dead are translated to text. Just as Anderson argues that a nation of newspaper readers is unwittingly engaged in the collaborative creation of an imagined community, so we can see these many war poems about reading and text creating an imagined, textualized war that the poems' readers become part of.

Textual metaphors and tropes abound in these poems, and they serve to remind us of the sentimental bonds of text that the poems enact and promote. War, death, and reading are inseparably bound in these poems. (Even the real lists of dead soldiers' names in the actual newspapers' columns looked typographically like poems when I glanced at them on the page. In this way, readers are compelled to contemplate and negotiate the visual and semantic slippage between lines of names on a list, lines of battling soldiers on the field, and lines of poetry.) In these poems, this war is portrayed as the ultimate sentimental text (according to the terms elucidated by theorists of sentimentality like...
Joanne Dobson, Mary Louise Kete, Shirley Samuels, and others, who claim that sentimentality in this era was primarily about affectional bonds and the home and family under the condition of loss, as I will detail more fully below, and reading is the sentimental bond that unites the imagined anxious, mourning, reading divided national family.

Images of reading and mourning can be found in sentimental poems from before the war as well, one example being these lines from "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven, A Poem," by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 1812 (reprinted as "Picture of War" in *Southern Punch*, 2 January 1865):

Oft o'er the daily page some soft one bends,  
To learn the fate of husbands, brothers, friends,  
On the spread map with anxious eye explores,  
Its dotted boundaries and pencilled shores.  
Asks where the spot that wrecked her bliss is found,  
And learns its name but to detest the sound.

A woman, reading, over the daily pages of the newspaper, trying to gain some kind of knowledge, some sense of certainty, about the fate of her loved one. (Another striking and apt image here is of the "dotted boundaries and pencilled shores," calling to mind the created bonds and fabricated boundaries that sentimentality is nearly always about.) The woman is pictured as trying to limn a map, trying to decipher a code --- reading and interpreting, in short. Although this is a prewar image, it is how this image of decoding, deciphering, and readerly interpretation takes on new valences when inflected by the American Civil War and mid-nineteenth-century American sentimentality that I am interested in looking at more fully.

The popular war poems foreground ideas about waiting, writing, reading, narrative suspense, and textuality. So many of these popular, anonymous, and forgotten poems image forth the war as a readable text, using highly text-based images (letters sent home, letters found on dead soldiers' bodies, casualty lists read aloud, "unjustified" injured bodies, epitaphs, engraven hearts, bloody feet leaving lines to be read on the land), and, after the war, anthologist after anthologist claims in prefatory material to be making meaning of the war through making a book of the war's poems (for instance, in his *War Songs of the Blue and the Gray*, Henry Williams maintains that he is binding the nation back together within the bound volumes of this collected verse --- in effect claiming that rereading these poems will reunite the severed sections of the nation). In these two senses --- both in the poems' imagery and in the later anthologies' aims --- I want to show how this war was not only written, but written in such a way as to make the war and its sacrificed bodies texts themselves, texts that would be deployed postwar in an effort at reconciliation and sentimental bonding through rereading.

The poems I will look at are overwritten in the sense of being writing about writing. Yet though overwritten, they are very underread. It is surprising that these thousands of poems and broadsides are so neglected and so underread now, given how regularly they were, and are, issued in anthologies --- and even these largely unread and untaught anthologies offer only a small fraction of all the pages and pages of poems that are out there in the poets' corners in nearly every illustrated weekly and magazine of the
Indeed, there were so many poems published during or right after the war that it is a wonder people had the time to write all these, let alone read them. There are seemingly more poems than there were battles to write poems about, more poems than there were soldiers or soldiers' families to read them.

As Fahs writes, "In the first year of the war commentators in both North and South marveled at the outpouring of newspaper poetry inspired by the conflict," (62) and, "Increasingly, the lived, personal experience of war became the subject of war literature. Although 'war-songs' and 'battle-calls' were published throughout the conflict, they were supplanted with an extensive literature that insisted instead on the primacy of the individual experience of war." (92) Fahs also notes that looking closely at all these war poems offers us a new perspective on "...the multiple ways in which the war was imagined into being." (4)

Given such a huge outpouring, it is all the more striking that no one now seems to know these poems exist, no one reads or teaches them. And the few poems from this war that do get anthologized are the early patriotic calls to arms or Walt Whitman's eroticized hospital images, not the sentimental late-war poems that can be found in all the periodicals and that offer a larger picture of what was being written and published and what people wanted to read during and right after the Civil War.

The notion of an outpouring can be perceived in this poetry in two senses, both of which speak to what about poetry matters in this war. There was the very real, material outpouring of thousands of poems in the presses. And the sense of an outpouring is also a central conceit for many of the poems themselves, which are written as if they are outpourings from the war, as if they are unmediated, live dispatches from the grim battlefield or the sorrow-filled parlor. Many poems want to be read as if they are "live" from the field, freshly lifted from a dead soldier's breast (written and read close to the heart), not even claiming to be recollected, yet they are necessarily written far removed from the imagined scenes they purport to portray. In fact, many of these poems' bylines' (when there is a byline) gender gives the lie to the poem's content, where for instance a male author writes as a soldier's mother, or a female poet writes as a dying drummer boy, etc. Additionally, most of these poems are necessarily by noncombatants (a complaint levelled against Melville, who wrote about the war without fighting in the war, which was actually a common practice). The poems are touted as immediate outpourings that present actual scenes of war without the poet's ever having been there, some going so far as to claim to be written by a soldier as he is dying. While appearing live, they are actually secondhand, obviously fictive, offerings (a secondhand textual offering is itself a telling image in so many of these poems) of ways to read war, primers on war by noncombatants that present a sentimental overlay to help readers accept and learn to read the war and its effects. These "live" poems want to make the war a story, one that can be seen in terms of sentiment's bounds and bonds, and one that can be read and reread far from the actual trauma and violence represented.

These poems and songs are presented as outpourings, as scenes or portraits that are not textual, not made or crafted, as if this felt war is lived through writing poems while at war. This sense of a sentimental outpouring highlights poetry's problematic position, where verse is seen as spontaneous (outpourings from the heart) and also literate, crafted, measured, and privileged. Poetry is both privileged and popular, spontaneous and studied. The Civil War poems are imagined as a bond, or stand-in, for
the war experience itself. This trope of a narratively impossible outpouring from the field calls our attention to ideas of narrative time and the impossibly written present. For example, in *Poetical-Pen Pictures of the War*'s poem "Will They Weep for Me at Home," the poem presents a soldier seemingly writing the poem, penning, "Here I lie among the slain." The poem is couched as if a soldier were writing a poem while dying, calling our attention to the extreme textuality of this war --- even death is authored, written. Even death is a sentimental story, clearly a fiction, an artful assemblage of words.

The conceit of writing while dying is persistent in these poems. These crafted outpourings from the war are premised on the idea that they are not created, authored texts, but rather a live glimpse of the war and its effects. So much so that in reading the huge outpouring of all the poems out there, it is easy to begin to confuse the war presented in the poems with actual news of the war, particularly since the poems are so often published in newspapers and magazines where they are surrounded by actual war news. That is, reading this outpouring of poems begins to feel like reading the war itself -- the war becomes text. These highly text-oriented poems appear to want to be read as "live," as the opposite of premeditated, authored texts, yet they are very much predicated on and concerned with issues of textuality.

**War Verse and Sentimental Bonds**

In this dissertation I will acknowledge the place of sentimentality in America's Civil War poems, and I will argue that the way this war was imagined in its many popular poems affords new insight into the way sentimentality worked in the war era. The numerous dying, wounded, and dead soldier poems reveal how and where war and sentimentality meet, prompting us to ask what happens to sentimentality's concerns when overlaid with war's concerns. There are many theorists now exploring nineteenth-century sentimentality in new and complex ways, most notably, Joanne Dobson, Mary Louise Kete, Eliza Richards, and Shirley Samuels. These critics have set out to recuperate texts from the sentimental era in America in order to revise our perceptions regarding the form and the era. Sentimentality, for these critics, is a response to mourning. Writing of post--Civil War era America, Kete says,

This mourning was, of course, essentially a conservative practice. But the strategies it used to conserve and preserve relationships that had been severed by death or travel proved to be generative. Sentimentality, I have argued, took a situation characterized by lack and experienced as grief to produce a culture characterized by excess. The dead were not dead but present and re-presentable in an infinite number of forms from literary representations to fetishistic tokens made of hair or paper. The dead were available, in this way, for circulation within an economy devoted to the exchange and accumulation of cultural capital. (149)

Kete, along with others, offers compelling new readings of the sentimental era and its proliferation of texts, but she, along with most other critics of sentimentality, fails to take into account a huge amount of material: Civil War poetry.
I will use these new (or newly understood) readings of sentimentality to open up the field to include the popular poetry produced during and written about the war. Reading the war poems in light of the recently understood concerns of sentimentality seems natural in many ways, given how many of sentiment's concerns are the concerns of war. As Samuels reminds us, "Sentimentality is literally at the heart of nineteenth-century American culture." (The Culture of Sentiment 4) Yet virtually no recent critic of sentimentality in American literature has examined the Civil War, seemingly the signal event in sentiment's century. Dobson writes that "sentimental tales traffic in abandoned wives, widows, orphaned children, and separated families; deathbed and graveyard scenes; and fantasies of reunion in heaven," (272) yet she makes no mention of the war, though it is at the heart of the nineteenth century. The Civil War, with its "abandoned wives, widows, orphaned children, and separated families; deathbed and graveyard scenes; and fantasies of reunion in heaven," provided the perfect opportunity to sentimentalize. Indeed, by Dobson's and others' reckonings, the war itself was the ideal sentimental text.

As Kete explains sentimentality, it is a set of discursive practices meant to counteract grief, to transform individual grief or anomie into a collective, collaborative mourning filled with comforting texts and assumptions. Kete defines nineteenth-century sentimentalism as stemming from "...a belief in the need to establish and maintain connections to one another and to God in the face of loss....sentimentality might best be understood as a specific kind of mourning. To grieve was to experience cynicism, discontinuity, isolation. To mourn was to break down the borders of distance or death and to establish the connections through which one could understand and identify oneself." (32) Kete writes that "The three signal concerns of the sentimental mode, then, are lost homes, lost families, and broken bonds," (17) and the form of sentiment helped nineteenth-century Americans "...to invent a new way of being in a situation in which the common denominator of existence is loss." (116)

It is all the more striking, then, that the Civil War and its poetry are virtually absent from Kete's and others' accounts of sentimentality, since the war and its poems are largely about "lost homes, lost families, and broken bonds." Kete argues that homes and families under the condition of loss are what most clearly mark something as sentimental. In this light, the Civil War, with all its loss (personal, national, political), was the signal event of the sentimental mode. In the many recent investigations into the mode of sentimentality in nineteenth-century studies, I have yet to find a critic who grapples with the huge national event that happens right in the middle of sentiment's century: the Civil War.

If sentiment is about family, home, bonds, mourning, and the threat of loss, how does the Civil War inflect it? If, as Dobson claims, "Literary sentimentalism...is premised on an emotional and philosophical ethos that celebrates human connection, both personal and communal, and acknowledges the shared devastation of affectional loss," (266) how are we to read sentimentality during a fratricidal war? How do the concerns of sentiment inflect or reflect the concerns of war? According to Dobson, "We can recognize sentimental literature by its concern with subject matter that privileges affectional ties, and by conventions and tropes designed to convey the primary vision of human connection in a dehumanized world," (268) all of which seems to point directly to the Civil War's concerns. I will argue in this dissertation that the profound felt loss of this
war (a loss of unity in terms of the sectionality of the nation, the loss of limbs, and the loss of brothers or sons or husbands in unmarked graves) generated a sentimental poetics that attempts to make the war a text, a readable and re-corded experience.

I will show how this war poetry repeatedly imagines the bodies of soldiers as texts, the reading of which will reunite the warring nation. Sentimentality is about national bodies and meaning making; as Samuels explains, "...in nineteenth-century America sentimentality appears as a national project: in particular, a project about imagining the nation's bodies and the national body," and, sentimenality "intimately linked individual bodies to the national body." (The Culture of Sentiment 3 and 4)

The ideal sentimental text that the numerous popular war poems make of the war is primarily about another key element of sentimentality: bonds. As Kete writes, "If home and family under the conditions of loss are inarguably two of the fundamental topoi of sentiment, the third is equally important. This third topic is that which holds homes together, holds families together, and holds the self together: that is, bonds." (37)

The bonds that were imagined uniting the nation were viewed as part of the war itself, as we can see in Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, 1861: "...though passion may have strained, it must not break the bonds of our affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this brave land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature...." Bonds are what this war was about --- both bonds (slavery) and bonding or boundaries (sectionality). This was a war fought about and amongst, among other things, boundaries, which resonates with sentimentality's concern with bonds, as well as with ideas of a bounded text, which I will explore more in this dissertation's conclusion.

According to the ethos of nineteenth-century American sentimentality, imaginary bonds are what keep people together in the face of common loss. Kete explains that "In the face of imminent or actual loss, sentimentality aimed at negating that loss by instituting (or revealing) a structure that maintained connections. Through the making and sharing of an idealized image of both the mourner and the mourned, say in a poem, [mourners] could force their grief into acceptable bounds." (156) As Kete writes of mourners during this period, joining together to compose and read sentimental poems "allowed them to instantiate imaginary bonds that would bridge the self-threatening differences of death, time, and distance." (104) Dobson points out that sentimentality is at heart about "...the primacy of human connection and the inevitability of human loss," (273) and Kete theorizes that sentimental poems and keepsakes were established as a way of connecting or bonding, "...to invent a new way of being in a situation in which the common denominator of existence is loss." (116)

I will show that these common topoi take on added resonance during wartime. Strikingly, Kete talks about sentimentalism both before and after ("...the changed function of sentimental discourse in the years following the war." (146)) the war, yet she seems to elide the war altogether, despite the war's apparent alignment with all the tropes and topics of sentiment as laid out by Kete and others (e.g., "...poems arising from a feeling of loss --- loss through death, loss by absence, loss due to change." (134)). The powerful promise of sentimentality, as recent critics have pointed out, is the promise of the bonds between people. Kete explains this as, "...the important utopian promise of sentimentality --- of nonviolated community, of restored losses, of healed wounds," (47)
and, "...sentimentality promised a way to reestablish connections that death and dislocation had apparently disrupted." (157) This ideal of sentimental bonding takes on new meanings when seen in light of a fratricidal war, at least as this war was imagined in its popular verse.

Bonds connect two separated things. They fasten or fix; they attach. A bond can both connect two things as well as be a stand-in for something not there. A bond fills in a gap, at the same time that it represents that gap. The idea of bonds carries much weight in this era, when so many died far from home, and when recent developments like railroads and newswires were newly connecting recently unconnected, far-flung loved ones. (Diffley writes that "The Civil War marked the first time that many Americans left the neighborhoods they knew well." (Where My Heart Is Turning Ever xliii)) As Ian Finseth reminds us, bonds in this era were "...the cultural adhesions that held together a geographically diverse nation" (10) during a time of great improvement in communication networks. Cavitch writes that sentimental bonds were imagined into being "...in the desperately held conviction...that the pain of separation will be healed and the beloved restored." (12)

We can read bonds as being part of an effort to overcome physical separateness (the distance and separation that war creates) as well as the separations of parts of the body from the whole (war injury and amputation). Sentimental bonds are part of an effort to bind these things back together into an imagined seamless, sentimental whole (an effort that, as I will mention later in this dissertation, Emily Dickinson makes clear is more complex and cynical than it seems). This war made pressing the notion of sentimental bonds in terms of the land, travel, compression of time and space (photographs, telegraphs, and the "impossible present" poems that I will detail), and ways of reporting the news.

In this dissertation I will explore Civil War poetry's investment in the era's anxiety around distance, being "live" and being there, witnessing, words' failure, death, bonds, survival, and reunion. As the narrator in the poem "Our Jubilee" from Harper's Weekly, 25 April 1863, puts it, "But oh 'tis hard, and pallid lips are dumb./When dear ones die afar from kindred ties." Mourning here strikes the mourners dumb, there are no words to convey what it means when sentimental bonds are broken, when loved ones die unwitnessed, far from home. There are no words for this grief, a sentiment that is conveyed in the elaborate constructions of words that make up these thousands of poems.

A sentimental bond is something very much there (a poem, a letter, a lock of hair, a photo, or other tokens and keepsakes), and it is at the same time something not there, a stand-in, a promissory note --- a fiction, in effect. "These 'bonds' (which figure both as promissory notes and as ties) are formed through an exchange of tokens of affection in an economy not of capital but of emotions," Kete explains. (37) Sentimental writings, according to Kete, "...aspire to create, maintain, and extend the bonds with which one individual is linked to another. Sentimental literature or art deals with the pain of loss by symbolically re-presenting it rather than eliding, covering over, or omitting it. The symbolic re-presentation of the loss provides the ground for the continued establishment of community." (178)

Poem after poem in this period presents a variation on this line from "Address, by S. Mason, On the Return of Prisoners" in Brown University's Hay Broadsides: "To
reunite our severed chain." Sentimental bonds are about the fictions that hold us together — they are, and they are about, the created connections that purportedly keep people attached over geographical distance and even through the separation of death. Particularly in this war, where so many loved ones died and were buried far from home, sentimental bonds (both the bonds of letters and poems, as well as the imagined bonds that these letters and poems were meant to instantiate) took on even more importance. Both prewar and during the war, sentimental bonds are about two things: They are about connecting living readers to each other, as well as about connecting the dead with the living. Sentimental bonds are about connections, and they are also about the fictions that stand in for actual confrontations with or knowledge of death and grief.

For this reason, the war — with all its new and confounding numbers of dead, as well as because it was the first time many Americans had been so far from home, so separated from dying loved ones — would seem to be more central to critics’ understanding of sentimentality in this century. Strikingly, there is no mention of the war in a discussion by Dobson that seems tailor-made for the war: "Violation, actual or threatened, of the affectional bond generates the primary tension in the sentimental text and leads to bleak, dispirited, anguished, sometimes outraged, representations of human loss, as well as to idealized portrayals of human connection or divine consolation." (267) Dobson goes on to write that "...in the sentimental vision, the greatest threat is the tragedy of separation, of severed human ties: the death of a child, lost love, failed or disrupted family connections, distorted or unsympathetic community, or the loss of the hope of reunion and/or reconciliation in the hereafter." (267) The war as it was imagined in popular poetry confronts all of these sentimental concerns head on. Death is the ultimate boundary these poems grapple with, and this boundary is constantly reimagined and renegotiated in the poems in light of sentimental bonds.

Bonds are stand-ins for not being there as a witness when someone is dying (which one never fully can be, even before the war — no one can truly witness or know death in all its meanings until they are dying themselves, and, as the poems will show, the dead’s last words necessarily fail at conveying death). The many popular Civil War poems, though seemingly about the bonds that tie mourners together in knowledge about and around death, are indeed often about the impossibility of ever being there, of ever connecting, of ever really knowing. They are about the lie behind the "live" battlefront poems, as well as the fiction in the witnessing death poems. The poems invite us to consider that there is no sure knowledge, no definite knowing, in these contexts.

I will explore how poems play with narrative time, where the words of the poem, though in the present tense, impossibly write and re-record death. These poems toy with the present tense of death and with the claim that death can never actually, accurately be conveyed, despite all these poems’ very claims to do just that. The impossibly present-tense poems offer an interesting gloss on the impossibility of the yearning the mourners in the poems exhibit — that is, a yearning to know with certainty the last thoughts, last words, last texts of dying loved ones.

The poems I will look at present the sentimental trope that bonds will last, that bonds will bring us sure knowledge, yet the transparent fictiveness of these "live" poems

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3 This line takes on added meaning when seen in light of a fratricidal war — a war between those who should otherwise be bound together — as well as when seen in light of what the war was primarily about: the chains of slavery.
contradicts this yearning, this desire for sure knowledge. These poems point out the falsity of the sentimental ideal of bonding, while still, in their sheer numbers and popularity, offering some sort of consolation and comfort. In this dissertation I will look at the way these poems foster a rethinking of sentimental bonds, reading, knowledge, and mourning. Thinking about sentimental bonds in all their registers (affective, literary, geographic, racial, political, etc.) promotes a newly nuanced and complex reading of popular Civil War poems.  

During this era, bonds were a key term from many perspectives, and in my dissertation I will look at the war poetry's compelling conflations of body, family, race, nation, and text through these imagined sentimental bonds. The poems make much of the imagined ties, or bonds, in this war, and issues of being bound to or bound by something --- an etymological relative to a bond --- also abound in these poems. The idea of a bond is an interesting concept in that it, like the sentimental poems themselves, both is something, and is a stand-in for that same thing. A bond can be a stand-in for what is not there, and it is also a way to link two things that are there. A bond, as a stand-in or promissory note, is a representation, and, as Timothy Sweet reminds us, issues of representation are fundamental during this war in terms of slavery and race. Representation is also interesting in terms of how this war is represented in the popular poems --- according to the poems' logic, the stand-ins for the war dead (that is, the poems) are imagined to be the dead they represent. That is, as I will show in this dissertation, reading the poems comes to be likened to reading the dead. Bonds contain, limit, stand-in for, and join. I will read through the multivalence of bonds and bounds in the popular sentimental war poems. The many registers of bonds and bounds in this poetry include the book, the nation, affectional ties, wounds, and narrative inevitability or suspense. I will read the ways the war poems portray this loaded term, thinking through how the verse conflates ideals of sentiment with ideas of nation and boundaries, wounds, life and afterlife, and the book. I hope to show, through a look at the popular war verse of the period, what this war does to and with sentimentality.  

Throughout the popular war poems, we can see imagined scenes of: the sentimental bonds of affection, the ties that bind, sentimentality's essential attachments; the bound nation --- united, yet defined by boundaries, sections; soldiers who are bound to serve, revealing notions of calling and country; bound bodies, with medical images of healing, suturing, binding, and many images of empty sleeves, stitches, and the binding or closing of a wound, a gap; being bound to the body --- a re-cord, texts on the heart and by heart; notions of being bound to read, the inevitability and at the same time suspense in these poems' images; the policing element of being bound or forced to feel what the poem makes you feel; the fact of being bound to die --- the inevitability of this, and its link to reading in these poems; being bound to be read in anthologies; being bound by reading, where the nation is (re)created by reading, singly yet as one, the same poems; the bonds of slavery, in relation to the union/bond/boundnedness of the country as a whole; the sentimental bonds that purportedly defy the boundary between life and death; being bound to a beat --- these poems are highly formalized, they are bound to a pattern, a

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4 So many of the popular war poems about death are about separation, about the breaking of bonds as well as the creation of boundaries (between two people, between two realms of experience), and it is interesting to remember that Walt Whitman famously toys with these sentimental ideas of bonds and boundaries in his poems during this era.
rhyme scheme, they are measured, like the beat that marching soldiers are bound to (as the poem "On Broadway" from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 21 May 1864, describes it, the soldiers are "Marching by with their measured tread"); the bounds of fictive versus real time in these poems; the bonds that tie or connect the nation via the railroad and the telegraph --- ways of getting news, ways of getting text (as Fahs writes, "Already in the fall of 1861, Holmes mused that 'new conditions of existence,' including the railroad and telegraph, made this war 'very different from war as it [had] been.'" (19)); and bonds as temporary stand-ins or promises (see the poem "Letter Home" below in this dissertation, where the bond is both a letter as well as money --- conflated with body parts --- sent back home from the war); the disintegration of boundaries in both war (national sections) and death (between the dead and those left behind to mourn). In their multivalence, bonds and bounds/boundaries (of race, of genre, of nation, etc.) are essentially about delimiting, about definitions and meaning making.

Reading sentimental bonds in light of the Civil War opens up the popular war poems in ways that have rarely been brought to light before. Sentimental bonds were a key part of this war in many ways. As Kete writes, "As early as 1858, when Lincoln opened his famous debates with Stephen Douglas by reiterating the biblical injunction that a 'house divided against itself cannot stand,' the tropes and figures of sentimentality had already framed both the war and its foreseeable resolutions," (153) and she goes on to write that the existence of the Confederacy "called into question not only Lincoln's words, but the whole system underwriting his rhetoric of sentmentality. The so-called bonds of affection holding these United States together had rebounded --- fractured --- into bonds of mortal hatred and antipathy." (156) Sentimentality was deeply woven into the nation's perceptions and representations of this war, so it is surprising that so little has been done to shed light on what sentimentality means in the poems of the war.

Fahs offers one of the few analyses of the war literature that takes into account sentimentality. She writes:

Sentimental stories and songs also focused intently on the individual experiences of the ordinary soldier on the battlefield and in the hospital, especially imagining that soldier's thoughts at the moment of death. Even as the mass movements of armies increasingly defined the war and the outcome of battle was increasingly mass slaughter, sentimental literature often explicitly fought against the idea of the mass, instead singling out the individual as an icon of heroism. This popular insistence on the individual, personal meanings of the war was far more prevalent than is usually recognized, and it militated against developing ideas of the war as new forms of system and organization in American life....within a wide-ranging popular literature and among a broad reading public, a sentimental insistence on the importance of sympathy and individual suffering increasingly became the most potent mode of discussing and coping with the wounding and killing of soldiers during the war. The sentimental soldiers of this popular literature were not "realistic" in the modes later developed by late-nineteenth-century social realism, with its...
insistence on the primacy of "fact" and a mimetic depiction of social conditions. Rather, these literary soldiers were highly conventionalized and typloogized, presented within a framework of sentimentalism that insisted on the primacy of emotion and sentiment as a form of "reality." Both a popular mode of thought and a language of expression in mid-nineteenth-century America, sentimentalism emphasized the central importance of emotion in the individual's life....Sentimentalists celebrated sympathy, not self-communion; they portrayed experiences of emotion as social events rooted in human relationships, legitimized through being witnessed by or communicated to another. (94--95)

The other critic I found who attempts to reconcile nineteenth-century sentimentality with the Civil War is Mark Schantz. He writes that "Even as the Civil War took a terrible physical and emotional toll on America, the traditions of sentimental poetry provided citizens with a way of comprehending the conflict --- simultaneously embracing the suffering that surrounded them while wrapping that suffering in the language of heavenly redemption and the prospect of earthly fame." (120) He explains that the tropes and traditions of sentimentality --- with its overarching concern with the bonds that make the boundary between life and death comprehensible --- were available to be utilized during the war, with its unprecedented numbers of dead, dying far away from those mourners who were affectively bound to them.

According to Schantz's read of the role of sentimental bonds in this war as seen in its verse, it is "...as if poetry itself was the medium most appropriate to bridge the narrow divide between life and death. The poems insisted that those in heaven continued to be tied to the earth by the bonds of sentiment and pure affection, and that, in some sense, the dead had never really died at all." (109) The poems in this sense can be seen as both presenting the bonds of affection, and being the bond, or the promissory note, between the dead and their mourners left behind. Schantz explains that sentimentality offered a frame, or a way of containing (binding) these new and horrific experiences. He writes of the war poetry: "The formulaic death scenes...themselves might be seen as a literary genre that owed much to the sentimental poetry of the prewar years," (113) and, "Thus did the antebellum poets of death shape the ways in which survivors constructed the meaning of death on the battlefield. That such sentimental forms 'so full of childlike simplicity' survived the horrors of war speaks to how powerfully engrained they were in the hearts and minds of those who confronted death on a mass scale." (114)

We can look to Lincoln's two inaugural addresses, with their talk of "the bonds of our affection," "bind[ing] up the nation's wounds," as well as the bonds of slavery, to see how much the idea of bonds (as well as separations) were part of the national dialogue during this era. In fact, the sentimental bonds that were meant to reattach the divided sections of the country were confusingly paired with the bonds of slavery that were dividing the country. Few modern theorists of sentimentality have taken notions of sentimental bonding and squared them with race during this era. In the war era, bonds of affection were meant to reunite the nation, but rarely do critics mention the bonds that one would want to escape --- that is, the bonds of slavery. Many critics have pointed out that nineteenth-century sentimentality was most importantly about being bound by bonds
--- of affection, of nation --- yet sentiment's concern with bonds takes on a very different resonance when seen in terms of race and the fetters or ties of slavery. (Samuels's own work on "...the dual sentimental aims of social containment and social change," (The Culture of Sentiment 8) as well as the essays she collects in The Culture of Sentiment, stand out as an exception to this lacuna in the study of sentimentality.) How are we to read sentiment's concern with union (a bringing together) with the era's other concern with liberty (being unbound)? Though very few of the popular war poems are overtly about slavery, they are very much about bonds, one aspect of which is slavery and freedom.

Images of bonds and bands, which in other contexts have been read as the cherished, if imaginary, ties that unite loved ones, must be read in an entirely different register in the poems that depict slaves. In her poem "The Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth," from The Anglo-African, 13 October 1863, 5 Frances Harper writes of black soldiers uniting, "To break each brother's chain." And in his poem "The Fifty-Fourth at Wagner," from Boston Commonwealth, 8 December 1883, James Monroe Trotter urges black soldiers "...to burst foul slavery's bands." In a popular poem of the period, "The Black Regiment," we read of the "bound slave"; in the poem "Slavery," from The Christian Recorder, 10 September 1864, we read that "Thy chain is breaking now"; and in the poem "Hymn of the Corps d'Afrique," by J. G. Hagen, in Christian Inquirer, we read "Glory to God, who our fetters has broken!"

These images of bonds in the sentimental poems on slavery offer a new perspective on the bonds of sentiment as articulated by Kete, Dobson, and others. The feeling of wanting to be unbound, free from bonds, in this context is missing in these critics' work on sentimental bonds, though essays in Samuels's collection do address forms of racially charged policing produced via sentimentality's conflations of body and text. The poem "Prayer of the Contraband," from Frank Leslie's Newspaper, 14 October 1865, mingles both these ideas of sentimental bonding in one poem, opening with a mention of slavery in terms of sentimental bonds or ties of affection --- "His children had been sold from him,/His home-ties rudely torn" --- and then, at the end of the poem, offering a prayer from the slave that makes clear that unbinding is what is wanted --- "Oh, make us truly free!" This idea of being free is essentially at odds with the sentimental ideal of bonds and attachment; indeed, the slave wanting to be truly free here reminds us that bonds in terms of race in this era were nearly anathema to sentiment, with its ideals of close ties and bounded community. The popular poems about the bonds, chains, ties, and links of slavery offer an entirely new perspective on the bonds of sentimentality --- one that critics on sentimentality such as Kete and Dobson have glossed over.

According to Schantz, many of the war poems are not about the war on a national level, rather, they are meant "...to mitigate the pain of separation felt upon the death of family members or friends." (111) Many of the popular war poems are about broken

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5 Which James Smethurst in his essay "'Those Noble Sons of Ham': Poetry, Soldiers, and Citizens at the End of Reconstruction" has identified as "...the only extant poem [about the 54th Massachusetts] by a black author published during the war" (Hope and Glory, eds. Blatt, Brown, and Yacovone 170). Although, in an email exchange with me, Smethurst qualified this claim, writing, "However, as you know, so much of the poetry of the period was published in newspapers and other periodicals, and there were so many papers then. As a result, I hesitate to say that it was the only poem published by an African American writer."
bonds, making the war as read in the poetry a very personal, felt war, one that portrays the national through the lens of sentimental bonds and attachments. As I will show, most of the popular war poems are not about this war's issues (slavery, state's rights, union, etc.); rather, they are about the inexplicability of death and the dying soldier, about personal loss and separation, the loss (and replacement) of the bonds of affection through the boundary of life and death. As Faust writes,

The Civil War matters to us today because it ended slavery and helped to define the meaning of freedom, citizenship, and equality. It established a newly centralized nation-state and launched it on a trajectory of economic expansion and world influence. But for those Americans who lived in and through the Civil War, the texture of the experience, its warp and woof, was the presence of death. At war's end this shared suffering would override persisting differences about the meaning of race, citizenship, and nationhood to establish sacrifice and its memorialization as the ground on which North and South would ultimately reunite. (This Republic of Suffering xiii)

The war as it was imagined in poetry while it was happening was about bonds, death, and ways of mourning, more than anything else. Just one example from the war poetry of how the bonds of affection supersede all other war concerns is this stanza from the poem "The Soldier's Betrothed" in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War: Selected from Our Union Poets, 1864:

She sees no conquering flag unfurled,
She hears no victory's brazen roar,
But --- a dear face which was her world ---
Perchance she'll kiss no more!

In this stanza we can see that the usual patriotic trappings and ideals are nothing next to the thought of losing a loved one. One dear face is all the world, and everything else pales in comparison. This sentimental war poetry shows us again and again that the war was seen in terms of the personal rather than the patriotic.

The poem "Courage, Mother," from American Broadsides and Ephemera, Series I, points out the priority put on sentimental bonds, and the poem also lets us know how these bonds are antithetical to the war effort. In this poem, as in so many others in this era, the bonds of family are imagined as what might keep a soldier out of war: "Would you fain allure me Mother,/By the ties of friendship dear?" And in the poem "The Missing Heroes," from America's Historical Newspapers, we read of the conflation of personal bonds and national bonds: "And from the ties that sever,/A Nation's life will shine." The war was imagined in these poems as an entirely personal war, evidencing a lack of concern for broader political or social ramifications.

Many of these war poems are about only sons, soldiers dying alone, widows weeping alone. What is the significance of this recurring image? This was, in either section of the country, imagined as a war for union, about uniting the nation around one
cause, yet the poems often foreground these atomistic images. In this dissertation I hope to shed light on what these poems are doing in terms of the obvious importance of sentimental bonds of affection as seen in the near constant refrain about the despair of being alone, of being the remains, of being what remains (alone).

The popular, imagined Civil War that I will focus on is about sentiment and attachment, it is about sentimental bonds. The poems insist on the individual, on the personal --- in effect, on the one versus the many, which is what sentimental bonds shore up, in the face of the mystifying multitude of the dead and dying during this war. As Faust writes, the paradox of the one versus the many is the paradox of sentiment in the face of all the newly dead during the Civil War; mourners in this period were forced to imagine "...how to grasp both the significance of a single death and the meaning of hundreds of thousands." (This Republic of Suffering 261) One way to look at sentimentality in this war is as a reaction to the question of death in terms of personal bonds or attachments when so many soldiers died, and these many died so far from home, attenuating the bonds of attachment like never before.

Genre, sentiment, and death are linked during the war in their insistence on the one and the many. As Faust writes,

This problem of the one and the many challenged Northerners and Southerners alike and served as a central theme in the war's popular culture. How could the meaning of so many deaths be understood? And conversely, how could an individual's death continue to matter amid the loss of so many? "All Quiet Along the Potomac Tonight," a song claimed and sung by both Union and Confederacy, focused with irony upon the dismissal of a single soldier's death as unworthy of notice. "'Tis nothing," it said, in the face of the lengthy casualty lists that have become commonplace: "a private or two now and then will not count in the news of the battle. [calling to mind both a count and an accounting, news] Yet the work of the song was to reclaim the importance of this individual life, the husband and father who was just as dead in this night of "quiet" as if he were one of the thousands who had perished in the din of dramatic battle. He was a man, the song insisted, who counts, even if he was not counted. (262)

Faust delineates the problems of genre, mourning, sentiment, and sure knowledge that I will examine more fully in this dissertation. (264) The tropes I note in this dissertation are not necessarily new to this war literature. Many are sentimental images that appear before and after the war. My dissertation will examine how this war does something different, how it gives new valence to these standard sentimental images. I will examine how war inflects the idea of bonds --- the signal sentimental construct --- and then how these tropes take on new import when read in light of the war and its concerns. In my dissertation I will work off of Fahs's and Schantz's claims that sentimental traditions

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6 As the poem "Lines on the American Struggle," by Mary Alice Sewell, from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 28 March 1863, puts it: "Thy homes are desolate, for traitorous hands,/Accurst and red, have snapped the Union bands/That bound thee, many in one."
shaped the war response in literature, and I will go more deeply into the popular poetry to show how and why these claims make sense.

These poems raise questions about narrative, meaning making, and the bonds or representations of sentiment during what Timothy Sweet reminds us is a time of huge upheavals in meaning and representation (Sweet writes of the many social changes that were concerned with representation in this period, not least of which was the abolition of slavery, new terms for citizenship, and the promise of equal voting rights for some citizens). In looking at these war poems and their anthologies, I want to examine how tropes of reading and actual reading are imagined as stitching or binding the war-ravaged nation back together. Throughout these poems, mourners read and are implicated in narrative strategies within the poems' images and scenes, and then the sheer number and mass popularity of all these songs and poems speak to the way actual readers/citizens of the nation were assuaged and, at least imaginatively, reunited by reading this verse.

The many sentimental Civil War poems on the dying or dead soldier offer us new insight into the complexities of sentimentality in nineteenth-century America. According to nineteenth-century sentimentality, the bonds between people are the only things that matter in the end, they are what give this life meaning. As Dillon writes, "A sentimental aesthetic, thus articulated, involves the capacity to bind a community through feeling...." (508) During this period, sentimental bonds and connections are celebrated in an effort to ward off the fear of the unknown, the unbounded-ness of thinking about separation, death, and dying. This war has traditionally been seen as overturning or upsetting sentimentality's comforting, sure knowledge, leading to modernity and irony. I would like to examine what this war, as evidenced in its popular verse, did with sentimentality in America. I will explore how these popular war poems deal repeatedly with ideas of sure knowledge, textual evidence, suspense, and the idea of what a bound, contained book or poem can offer its readers.

**Words to Remember**

Sentimentality in mid-nineteenth-century America was, in part, about the ways words, particularly poems, could both be about the bonds that connect others, as well as be the bonds that connect others. In other words, reading the poems themselves was meant to enact the affective bonds that the poems fictionalize. As Kete describes this, in a prewar context, "Her poem, an imaginative construction, is a medium for the restoration of 'the silken ties that bound him' to her heart that had 'all been torn apart,'" and, "This act of conservation is essentially generative; the symbolic work of imagining a replacement also provides for the symbolic re-production of that which is considered original or authentic." (6) These poems are both about the bonds of war, and at the same time the reading of them is meant to be one of the lived experiences of these bonds during this felt war. Reading these poems would, as Kete writes in another context, allow readers "to instantiate imaginary bonds that would bridge the self-threatening differences of death, time, and distance." (104)

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7 It is interesting to remember in this context that a bond is a connection as well as a replacement, or promissory note.
Yet a large number of the poems' imagery is about the failure of words to convey accurate meaning, about the way words fail to connect. The inadequacy of words is a central concern in many of these war poems. The poems, made of words, are very often about words that leave more unsaid than said, about the way words fail at recording meaning or representing experience. The poems often at once promote an idealized sense of sentimental bonding through words, yet at the same time they demonstrate words' failure to connect. A charge frequently leveled against sentimentalism is that its words are false. Dillon quotes June Howard when she writes, "...when we call an artifact or gesture sentimental we are pointing to its use of some established convention to evoke emotion; we mark a moment when the discursive processes that construct emotion become visible," (51) and Dillon goes on to assert, "Sentimentalism, in which formalizing aims are so evident, recognizable, and even excessive, thus seems entirely distant from this dream of exteriority, and it is for this reason that sentimentalism is so seldom viewed as the location of aesthetic value today." (516--517) Sentiment is often viewed as a way of making words, discursive practices, and established form more essential than what is meant to be conveyed by those words, so it is especially interesting that a large number of the popular sentimental war poems are about words' failure --- about the smallness of words in the face of the enormity of emotion or experience to be conveyed. That this was a war immersed in words --- albeit words that often display the failure of words to connect or convey --- is what I hope to show in this dissertation.

Sentimentalism has frequently been charged with showing the scaffolding of emotion or experience --- as Loeffelholz writes, sentimental poems "...evoke feelings at once excessive and excessively mediated, excessive because mediated, indeed cultivated, through reading; feelings lettered, rather than feelings spontaneous." (17) --- and I would like to examine what happens when this seemingly stiffly formal, highly wrought, discursive mode actually asserts, again and again, that what it wants to convey is simply beyond words, that the words on which it relies to make form recognizable are words that only further confound, words that show up their own inadequacy, their own fictionality. What does it mean that these poems point again and again to their seeming failure, and then why are there so many of these seemingly failed poems --- what is so appealing about them?

Timothy Sweet writes of words' failure in another context during this era: "With the outbreak of war, the critical question [was] whether physical violence could produce a legitimate ideological consensus where language had failed...." (1) Here Sweet describes how consensus --- a union or bonding --- was not achieved through words, through text, and the question that remains is whether this bond can be achieved through the violence of war. What might this mean in light of all these war poems --- how does this violence, which is portrayed as unsayable in the poems, get put to words?

The war, through its poetry, becomes war reading --- something to be read during the war in an attempt to search for and make meaning. So much of this poetry is about wanting to know what cannot be witnessed firsthand (yet, as I will show, this knowing is always failed and flawed), about getting news (the list poems), wanting a re-cord (metabolizing text), wanting to know, to see what the war is for those not in combat (the

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8 The opening stanza of an Emily Dickinson poem from 1860 (which I will examine more fully later in this dissertation) touches on this issue of war and words and words' failure in the context of war: "To fight aloud, is very brave ---/But gallanter, I know/Who charge within the bosom/The Cavalry of Wo --- "

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"live" from the field news poems). In this sense the poems are about creating stories, they are about conjectures, fictions --- they are about wanting to know what is essentially unknown and unknowable (war, and, more crucially, death) except by those who experience it firsthand.9

David Blight writes, "The long and troubled career of Civil War memory began well before the conflict ended. It took root in the dead and the living. The living were compelled to find meaning in the dead, and, as in most wars, the dead would have a hold on the living." (6) Blight's comments recall the pull of sentimental bonds. As he notes, the dead pull on the living, and the living pull on the dead. The bonds or attachments of sentiment inflect war mourning as well as war meaning making. Richard Henry Stoddard's post--Civil War poem "A Dirge" says much about how the reading nation attempted, at least imaginatively, to make and frame the meanings found in the many war dead. The entire poem reads,

Low lies in dust the honored head,  
Cold is the hand that held the sword;  
Slowly we bear them to the dead,  
And lay them down without a word.

What is there to be said, or done?  
They are departed, we remain;  
Their race is run, their crowns are won,  
They will not come to us again.

Cut off by fate before their prime  
Could harvest half the golden years,  
All they could leave they left us --- time,  
All we could give we gave them --- tears.

Would they were here, or we were there,  
Or both together, heart to heart.  
O death in life, we can not bear  
To be so near --- and so apart!

The poem opens by essentially claiming that the war dead are beyond words or meaning making. The poem, made of mourning words, begins by suggesting that words fail in the context of mourning. The war's mourners can merely "lay them down without a word." There are no words fit for this occasion. Indeed, in the face of all the war dead, in addition to no fit word, there is simply no known appropriate response: "What is there to be said, or done?" No saying or doing --- no meaning making --- will alter the reality of all these dead soldiers, will alter the finality of the severed sentimental bonds: "They are departed, we remain." The poem dwells on notions of sentimental bonding, conjuring up images of connections that have been cut off by war's death: "They will not come to us again," and,

9 Interesting ideas of firsthand as opposed to secondhand will be examined later in this dissertation.
Would they were here, or we were there,
Or both together, heart to heart.
O death in life, we can not bear
To be so near --- and so apart!

In this final stanza the poem touches on the importance of sentimental bonds in the war and postwar era. The dead are called back, are wished back ("Would they were here, or we were there"). The separation between death and life is stark and final, and Stoddard ends by emphasizing the pull of these sentimental attachments or bonds ("Or both together, heart to heart," "To be so near --- and so apart!"). a pull that the many, many Civil War deaths made all the more powerful, and a pull that, in so many of the war and postwar poems, is seen as more real than any consolation faith in an afterlife could offer.

Stoddard, mourning all war's loss, asks in "A Dirge," "What is there to be said, or done?" I will argue in this dissertation that, as seen in the popular verse of the war, a certain class of the nation tried to make meaning out of the many dead by saying and doing --- by writing and reading the dead into verse and then translating the war dead into a book that would fashion grieving readers into national citizens. Diffley and Fahs have taken Walt Whitman's oft-cited line that "the real war will never get in the books" as a jumping-off point to show that the real war may not have made it into the books, but it was very much articulated in the era's popular press. I would like to go farther and claim that the "real war" was indeed abundantly available in contemporary periodicals and broadsides, and that many of the periodical poems actually aim to make the war a book, with all the attendant implications that this book-making raises. I will look at how this popular war verse textualizes the wounded and the dead and those who remain behind to mourn them; and how these sentimental poems and their anthologizers make the war into a legible, bounded text in order to make meaning out of the war's unbounded horrors.
Chapter One: Suspense, Narrative, and News

What are the implications of making the Civil War into a text, into poems that tell a story? What might this tell us about ideas of fiction, the stories we tell ourselves, what writing means, realism, sentiment, and what it means to be interpretable? It could be said that the atrocities of war are so extreme as to be beyond words. The devastation of the American Civil War has been seen by some as being beyond words. As Ian Finseth writes, "Writings about the Civil War, 'literary' or otherwise, can be read partly for how they respond to these problems of realism and the culture of information." (11) Popular Civil War poems make much of the era's notions of news, live accounts, and the realism as well as fiction involved in the telling and not telling of trauma. It is something of a commonplace in historical and literary accounts of nineteenth-century America to think of the Civil War as a hinge, behind which rests sentimentality and faith, and in front of which lies realism and irony. Critics have claimed that this war, in its unprecedented numbers of dead and the way its fratricidal violence came up against previously comforting ideas of nation and faith, ushered in a new realism, one that came to grips with the very unsayable nature of catastrophic events. As Finseth writes,

...realism's confounding challenge was violent death. The central reality of the Civil War that Americans had to assimilate was the unprecedented level of trauma and bereavement: more than 620,000 dead and more than one million wounded....How does one put words to such suffering without either trivializing, heroizing, or otherwise falsifying the experience?....Where the carnage lies raw, unburied, and forgotten, the most effective realism may be one that embodies the failure of words, a realism akin to what Mitchell Breitweiser has discerned in Mary Rowlandson's narrative, which "is a realistic work, not because it faithfully reports real events, but because it is an account of experience that breaks through or outdistances her own and her culture's dominant means of representation, and because it is itself a continuation of that breakthrough rather than a fully composed and tranquilized recollection." (12)

Though adhering to Wordsworth's ideal of poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquility," which Breitweiser references above, popular Civil War poetry offers a complex gloss on the limits as well as consolations inherent in the representation of lived (though not live) trauma.

While some critics look at the pre--Civil War era to examine sentimentality, and other critics look to the era after the Civil War to elucidate the rise of realism and irony, I propose looking at the popular poems of the Civil War to think through the complicated nature of both sentimentality and realism in this period, where words are, paradoxically, used to portray what is seemingly beyond words. I want to look at the notion underpinning many popular Civil War poems --- that rather than beyond words, this war's unprecedented pain and suffering are captured and contained within words in complex,
often contradictory, ways, offering a gloss on Emily Dickinson's 1860 lines, "To fight aloud is very brave,/But gallanter, I know,/Who charge within the bosom,/The cavalry of wo." Dickinson suggests that, speaking from personal knowledge ("I know"), fighting aloud is not nearly as brave or gallant as more internal, silent struggles. She seems to be saying that words in and about battle are one thing, but an entirely other, harder thing are the words left in battle's wake: the words of mourning. Though she may or may not be talking about actual war, I would like to read Dickinson's lines in terms of the sayable and unsayable push and pull in so many popular Civil War poems, where fighting aloud -- the words (the poems as well as the stories in the poems) of war --- as well as words of mourning are portrayed in meaningfully layered lines of verse.

As Cavitch writes about elegy, "It offers an anodyne to some of the painful demands of narrative...." (12) Just as Sallie Brock and other Civil War poetry anthologizers assert, we can be consoled by and through reading. Yet an immensely traumatic experience like war death can also alter our relation to reading and text. Cavitch goes on to allege that "...trauma does not simply undermine narrative capacity. It alters our perspective on the narrative capacities that remain. It makes narrative risky; it makes us wary of occasions for storytelling." (11) He quotes Huck Finn as an instance of this feeling of narrative risk, anxiety, and bodily dis-ease: "I ain't agoing to tell all that happened --- it would make me sick again if I was to do that." Telling and untelling words are what is at stake in narrative about trauma --- that is, when conveying trauma, words both tell and do not tell all that there is to convey.

So many of these popular Civil War poems, read and reread, offer a complex and risky verse narrative of a nation at war. Images of suspense, fiction, sure knowledge, narration, and reading abound in these war poems. Indeed, both the "pleasurable emotion of anticipation and excitement," as well as the "unpleasant emotion of anxiety or apprehension" (Wiktionary definition of the word suspense), that define suspense inflect most of the key moments in these poems. The suspense in these poems (both in the reading of them as well as in the reading within them), as well as suspense's correlative notions of knowing, evidence, certainty, and reading, appear to be what binds the nation's poetry readers during this war. As a line in the poem "Acheldama" from Harper's Weekly, 19 July 1862, asserts simply: "We need this anguish of suspense." Though this poem is about faith and God and war, its sentiment holds true in terms of the ideas of narrative and knowing or not knowing that play so large a part in many other war poems of the period. These popular war poems force us to question what the role of suspense is in reading and mourning.

In her book on popular short stories of the war, Diffley examines "...what happened to predictable emplotment when history fractured the assumptions that readers often anticipated, editors often encouraged, and writers often undercut." (Where My Heart Is Turning Ever xlii) Diffley proposes performing "...an analysis of narrators and implied readers in the process of constructing meaning, as well as an evaluation of how the spread of magazine stories affected public memory and the ways in which ordinary Americans would recollect the Civil War to this day," (xlv) and she looks at Civil War popular short stories to examine this "...historical crisis and its impact on narrative design." (xvii) I am claiming that, in addition to the short stories of the period, the popular poems of the Civil War are heavily invested in what have traditionally been seen as novel-like notions of narrative and suspense, and these concerns with suspense and
knowing can tell us much about this period's anxieties about fiction and reading, about ways of telling and not telling trauma, and about war.

As Shira Wolosky points out, Emily Dickinson's unpublished poems from the war years also take part in this seemingly national preoccupation with suspense, narrative, and conclusion. Dickinson writes,

My Triumph lasted till the Drums  
Had left the Dead alone  
And then I dropped my Victory  
And chastened stole along  
To where the finished Faces  
Conclusion turned on me  
And then I hated Glory  
And wished myself were They.

What is to be is best descried  
When it has also been  
Could Prospect taste of Retrospect  
The tyrannies of Men  
Were Tenderer --- diviner  
The Transitive toward.  
A Bayonet's contrition  
Is nothing to the Dead.  

In this poem dead soldiers --- "the finished faces" --- offer an irrefutable fact, a stark conclusion, to what had seemed like battle triumph. Here the song of victory that the drums beat out ends as soon as the narrator is left face to face with the dead's finished faces. Only then, in retrospect, does battle glory become hated, and the narrator wishes she were one of those dead, finished faces. The unalterable fact of death --- an unrevisable conclusion --- is a text that the narrator would have changed, if this loss and the devastation it brings could have been forecast. Here Dickinson plays with ideas of fiction (making alternate realities), reality, narrative, and the present tense of death. She explores the pull of suspense, of not knowing, concluding that the reality of war death, seen in retrospect, can never make the previous suspense of not knowing appealing. She ends by noting that regret for the war dead does not alter the fact of the war dead.

Wolosky adds much to our understanding of this poem, writing,

The notion of predestination, of providence, had traditionally been applied to the lives of individuals. Millennialism applied it to the nation and to history as well. The war was seen as part of a millennial pattern, but Dickinson refused to regard it as a moment in sacred history from which point of view it would be retroactively just. She denounced suffering and death, even after victory. The second stanza at first seems to concede that "Retrospect" would render "Prospect" more tender and divine. In an image of reading not unlike that found in the "Battle Hymn," where a "Fiery gospel"
is "read" in "burnished rows of Steel," Dickinson admits that "What is to be" may be "best descried / When it has also been."
But this concession is then retracted. In the moment of occurrence, this is small comfort. Nor is it very relevant to the "finished Faces." The contrition of guns is, the poet concludes, "Nothing to the Dead." (51)

Making a text, or story, of the war --- where the war and its violence and regret can be foretold or recalled, making use of suspense and narrative strategies --- can be seen in countless popular sentimental war poems. In "A Soldier's Dream," from Harper's Weekly, 14 January 1865, the Civil War is a story to be told, it is a narrative:

We had marched hard all that weary day,
And camped at night by a little stream,
Where all night long on our arms we lay,
To watch and rest, or to sleep and dream ---
To dream of the loved ones far away,
Or hear in the wind the shell's wild scream.

As I lay on the ground beneath a tree
That night --- my limbs weary and cold ---
I dreamed. In my dream all seemed to be
At peace, and myself had grown lame and old;
While a bright-eyed boy sat on my knee,
Begging of the war-times to be told.

His bright eyes filled with childish tears,
And his pouting lip parted in pain,
At the tale of woe in those by-gone years,
And the battle-fields strewn with the slain,
But laughed with joy when told of the cheers
That greeted triumphant peace again.

More there was of my vision --- much more;
Much more, indeed, of what "might have been:"
For peaceful memory was free to soar
In realms far away from war and sin;
But a voice now, only half heard before,
Was repeating, "Third relief --- fall in!"

Here the war, as it is lived, forms a backdrop for a dream of peace, where one can tell a story of the war ("the tale of woe in those by-gone years"), as it will be recalled in the future --- "In my dream all seemed to be/At peace, and myself had grown lame and old;/While a bright-eyed boy sat on my knee,/Begging of the war-times to be told." --- a narrative layering that highlights the sense of textuality associated with this war. The war
is something that can be told as a story, a dreamed-of fiction, and this telling can be
dreamed, all of which can be read in a story-like poem.

The war's popular poems paint a picture of readers who want sure knowledge,
who want a clear picture of the war, or, more accurately, of the war's dead. Both reading
and death are tightly bound to the idea of suspense, to the idea of wanting to know more
and at the same time never fully knowing all. Readers want to know what comes next
when they read, just as those who confront death want to know, or have faith in, what
will come next. "The suspense is killing them," as the saying goes. The suspense of
knowing and not knowing are what reading and death are ultimately about, as confirmed
by so many of these war poems. In poem after poem, those imagined as dying want to
know what will happen next, those imagined as mourning want to know what happened
to their loved ones at the moment of their faraway deaths, and of course all those readers
both in the poems and of the poems want what all readers want --- to know what will
happen next. They do not want the story or text (indeed, life's narrative) to end, to not
offer certain answers.

These war poems foreground the place of reading and text in this yearning and
suspense about knowing and not knowing that death, particularly this new nineteenth-
century war death far from home and loved ones, is all about. The poems call our
attention to the similarities between reading and death, allowing us to see the prominent
role of reading and texts in the yearning and mourning that surround death. The idea of
sure knowledge and the assumptions about reading, suspense, and knowing that these
poems toy with is examined by Faust when she writes of "...the many thousands of loved
ones left not just without their husbands, brothers, or sons, but bereft of the kind of
information that might enable them to mourn," the kind of information or sure knowledge
that would provide "relief from the incapacitating uncertainty that controlled their lives." (This Republic of Suffering, 131--132) Cathy Caruth writes movingly about the space of
knowing and not knowing in which those who survive death are thrust. She writes that
"Between the 'when' of seeing his dying and the 'when' of his actual death there is an
unbridgeable abyss, an inherent gap of knowing, within the very immediacy of sight, the
moment of the other's death." (39), and, "It is only by recognizing traumatic experience
as a paradoxical relation between destructiveness and survival that we can also recognize
the legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience." (58) Those
who survive the war dead and are left behind to mourn them do so in a space of
uncertainty, a gap of not knowing, which I am arguing the nation attempted to fill with
texts upon texts that aim to bind and contain the unknown of death through words that
can be read and reread.

The war poetry's novel-like use of narrative and suspense offers many instances
where we as readers know more of the key pieces of information in the poems' characters'
lives than the characters themselves can know. In many of these war poems, characters
are depicted as waiting to know if a loved one is dead, and to know how they died; they
are left with no sure knowledge, merely the promise of fiction. But as readers of this
fiction are allowed the (granted, also fictive) knowledge that the readers and mourners in
the poems are denied and are left, in the life of the poems, forever searching for. One
example of this purely textual knowing, where readers of the poem know more, and know
it textually, than actors in the poem, can be found in this stanza from "Our Color-
Sergeant," in Harper's Weekly, 20 June 1863:
Yet who shall bear the news that he is dead
To her? She waits
Beside Hope's gates,
Nor knows her warrior's soul is sped.

In these lines, this war poetry's concern with both knowing and news is apparent. We know more, and know it more assuredly, even though it is fiction, than those who wait for news, wait for sure knowledge, in the poem. Similarly, in *Harper's Weekly*'s "Lost in the Wilderness," 9 July 1864, an addendum affixed to the poem tells us about the loss that the woman in the poem cannot know. This is an extremely textual, eminently read knowledge, as it is only for the poem's readers' eyes, not included in the poem's plot, but rather in an addendum:

Alas! and she could not know
That the grass was springing green,
And the rank weeds hiding a SOMETHING where
A knightly soul had been

    Again, in this stanza from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*'s "Off Duty," 15 July 1865, we can see the common practice in this war poetry of offering a layered sense of narrative time, where the poem's readers know more and know it with more certainty than the loved ones in the poems. We as readers are allowed to peek behind the scenes in the poem's story, we are granted textual, almost authorial rights of omniscience, which inflects so much of this poetry's notions of readerly suspense, as well as what we can and cannot know, and why. We are invited to consider what we, as opposed to the characters in the poems, are bound to read, bound to know, as well as what suspense means here, what the implications are for knowing and not knowing. The telling stanza reads:

May-be far away in some fair Northern home
They wait for the soldier who's sleeping;
They will wait and will watch for their hero to come,
Till watching is turned into weeping.
They will wait and they'll weep for the one that they love,
Who far on the battlefield's lying,
Till they join his freed soul in the regions above
Where is never more sorrow nor dying.

The imagined soldier's loved ones watch and wait, never knowing for sure the news, the narrative, of their soldier, while we as readers know. Reading, text, is privileged here.

We can also see this idea of complicated narrative time, where we readers know more than characters in the poem, in "After the Battle of Antietam," from *Harper's Weekly*, 4 July 1863:

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10 This calls to mind the way this war poetry often plays off ideas of news, history, and fiction, where obviously fictional accounts are couched as news or history --- so much so that the news as read in the poems almost comes to seem like the true news of the actual war.
Night on the battle-plain stained with gore,
Night in the eyes now closed for aye;
But a morning bathes a nightless shore
Where a maiden watches and waits no more,
Nor a wife sits mute by a cottage-door,
With a child that forgets to play.

Here we know more as readers; this is a very readerly, textual knowing, which is akin to the reading-the-list poems in Chapter Two of this dissertation, where knowing via reading is prized, and the suspense inherent in all reading is highlighted.

Another poem that makes interesting use of textual metaphors and images to detail loss, and where the poet and poem's reader know and read more than the characters in the poems are allowed to know and read, is "At Fredericksburg," by L. C. M., from Harper's Weekly, 7 February 1863:

It was just before the last fierce charge,
When two soldiers drew their rein,
For a parting word and a touch of hands ---
They might never meet again.

One had blue eyes and clustering curls ---
Nineteen but a month ago ---
Down on his chin, red on his cheek:
He was only a boy, you know.

The other was dark, and stern, and proud;
If his faith in the world was dim,
He only trusted the more in those
Who were all the world to him.

They had ridden together in many a raid,
They had marched for many a mile,
And ever till now they had met the foe
With a calm and hopeful smile.

But now they looked in each other's eyes
With an awful ghastly gloom,
And the tall dark man was the first to speak:
"Charlie, my hour has come.

"We shall ride together up the hill,
And you will ride back alone;
Promise a little trouble to take
For me when I am gone."
"You will find a face upon my breast ---
I shall wear it into the fight ---
With soft blue eyes, and sunny curls,
And a smile like morning light.

"Like morning light was her love to me;
It gladdened a lonely life,
And little I cared for the frowns of fate
When she promised to be my wife.

"Write to her, Charlie, when I am gone,
And send back the fair, fond face;
Tell her tenderly how I died,
And where is my resting-place.

"Tell her my soul will wait for hers,
In the border-land between
The earth and heaven, until she comes:
It will not be long, I ween."

Tears dimmed the blue eyes of the boy ---
His voice was low with pain:
"I will do your bidding, comrade mine,
If I ride back again.

"But if you come back, and I am dead,
You must do as much for me:
My mother at home must hear the news ---
Oh, write to her tenderly.

"One after another those she loved
She has buried, husband and son;
I was the last. When my country called,
She kissed me and sent me on.

"She has prayed at home, like a waiting saint,
With her fond face white with woe:
Her heart will be broken when I am gone:
I shall see her soon, I know."

Just then the order came to charge ---
For an instant hand touched hand,
Eye answered eye; then on they rushed,
That brave, devoted band.

Straight they went toward the crest of the hill,
And the rebels with shot and shell
Plowed rifts of death through their toiling ranks,
And jeered them as they fell.

They turned with a horrible dying yell
From the heights they could not gain,
And the few whom death and doom had spared
Went slowly back again.

But among the dead whom they left behind
Was the boy with his curling hair,
And the stern dark man who marched by his side
Lay dead beside him there.

There is no one to write to the blue-eyed girl
The words that her lover said;
And the mother who waits for her boy at home
Will but hear that he is dead,

And never can know the last fond thought
That sought to soften her pain,
Until she crosses the River of Death,
And stands by his side again.

This poem is about complexes of narrative time, where we as readers of the poem, and
the poet, are the only ones who know the news (yet the entire poem is fictive, so this is no
surprise), and it is also an elaborate, poetic construction of words about words that never
get written, letters that will never be delivered. Devices of narrative and narrative time, as
well as images of getting and not getting word ("And never can know"), are toyed with in
this poem. The poem's penultimate stanza in particular is very telling:

There is no one to write to the blue-eyed girl
The words that her lover said;
And the mother who waits for her boy at home
Will but hear that he is dead

Not only is this evidence of the lack of knowledge, or narrative, that the characters in the
poem suffer but the readers of the poem are assured of, this is also very much a textual
knowledge, a textual knowing. The poem ends with "There is no one to write...the
words," yet the poem has (fictively) written the words, and we are left to read the words
meant for loved ones, words that will never reach them. There is no one to write to those
who remain. They lack the written words that we have in front of us, they lack the story
or the narrative of the loved one's last words that will offer relief from their suspense.
And the mother who waits at home without the knowledge that we read so easily will
"but hear that he is dead," implying that what she will learn will be barren of text, of
narrative. She will only hear the bare facts, not the elaborate, embellished narrative that
we get. She will "but hear" one word, "dead," the starkest of stories. The "but" in "but hear" reminds us of the prominence of text in this war's popular poetry. Here writing, text, is privileged, as opposed to "but hear[ing]." Writing, and reading, mean more, according to these poems, than merely hearing. According to the poem, text is what gives shape and meaning to war deaths. We can infer from the poem that, as the war is imagined in the poetry, it is bound by and delimited by text. Any war experience that is not limited and delineated by textual lines simply ceases to exist. ¹¹ This mother's will be a heard learning, not a read one, as the soldier had intended. She hears a fleeting, unverifiable piece of news; news that is not first- or even secondhand. She gets no text, nothing to read and reread. The news the mourning mother receives is indirect and almost rumorlike: she "[w]ill but hear that he is dead." It is not the immediate fact of death that can be discerned in text, the poem seems to imply, but "that he is dead" (emphasis mine), putting death at some remove, ensuring it is not news she can incorporate or take in without question. The news she receives seems at arm's length, unlike the "[w]inged arrows of pain and grief" that the read news of death becomes in "News from the War," from War Songs of the Blue and the Gray. (Another interesting image in this poem comes when we read, "Write to her, Charlie, when I am gone,/And send back the fair, fond face." Here is a miniature that is meant to help soldiers "face the nation," to put a face on what they are fighting for; these faces must be returned when the soldiers die. Yet this one presumably is not, since no one writes to the loved one in the end. This grief finds no recipient, no one to face it.)

Ideas of reading, text, and fiction are intimately bound with death in these poems, as alluded to in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War's "Oh! Take Me Home to Die," when the poet makes a request of his readers/mourners: "When of my death you tell." Death and text are intertwined in multiple ways: the dying soldier is writing a letter to his loved ones at home while he is dying, he is assuming the news of his death will be read, and he also assumes that the story of his death will be known or told, will be put into words. We can see that questions of death are always textual, they are always fictive, always made up, never known for certain, always requiring a willing suspension of disbelief from mourners and readers. This poem's concern with telling the story of war death to those at home offers two different perspectives: one as a "live" dispatch from the scene of the war death, and the other as a soldier's request to have his death narrative retold, relayed.

The narrative concerns of these poems read as almost novel-like, and the readers of the poems most always know more and with more certainty than the readers in the poems. These poems are story-like and clearly fictive, yet sure knowledge, nonfictional news is what is portrayed as being so ardently sought by the characters in the poems, calling our attention, as readers, to ideas of fiction versus knowledge or news, to the seemingly paradoxical idea of fictive knowledge, on which the poems rely to offer consolation. In reading the poems, we are compelled to contemplate notions of sure knowledge in relation to fiction making. The very publishing venue of most of these poems, in the poets' corners of popular newspapers and magazines, in the midst of news accounts of the war as well as of actual lists of dead and wounded soldiers, points to this era's looser boundaries between fiction and nonfiction.

¹¹ Indeed, the war, for those not fighting and dying in it (then, as well as now, in future generations), is only available in the bound, squared-off form of text or photos, a fact that reminds us of the inadequacies inherent in conveying any experience to others.
The idea of getting news, of gaining knowledge, is paramount in these poems of war deaths, as we will see in the reading-the-list poems, in the re-cord poems, and finally in these poems about narrative and narration. In many of these more narrative, more novel-like poems about soldiers' deaths, we are led to believe that the poem is a live dispatch, an outpouring from the field, usually purportedly written by a soldier as he is dying. The sense of parallelism or simultaneity, the "meanwhile," in these poems, is a very novel-like structure, one where we, omniscient readers, are allowed to know more than the imagined loved ones in the poems who are going through the actual trauma. We readers, as well as the poems' narrators, know more and with more surety. We are able to see both screens of the split screen, both sides in the simultaneous yet separate scenes. We as readers know more. We can textually bridge, or bind, time and space (like the telegraph), and in this way the bonds of sentiment in war are also narrative bonds/bounds. The "meanwhile" poems point out the (fictive) connections between worlds severed that normally would be necessarily joined. The textual bonds evidenced in the complexly narrated poems speak to this era's concern with affectional bonds and sentimental connections. These poems' concern with suspense, the missing, and double time/meanwhile episodes is intimately connected to ideas of narrative and fiction and textuality. It is also interesting to think through the different ways more cagey war poets, like Melville, Whitman, and Piatt, play with these narrative conventions.

The popular war poems hinge, narratively, on the idea of "meanwhile," where we read of the ostensibly live death on the battlefront as well as the breaking of this news on the home front. These complicated narrative time poems take place in two different, parallel, simultaneous frames, much like a novel negotiates this same "meanwhile" technique. The simultaneity points to issues of knowing, not knowing, suspense, and sure knowledge, particularly as it pertains to these poems' and this era's beliefs about death. These war poems are striking in their use of this concept of narrative time, where we get essentially a split screen in the poem of "live" scenes on both the battlefield and the homestead, as well as the impossible act that poem after poem details of a soldier narrating, textualizing, his own moment of death. The narrative time poems hinge on the question of sure knowledge (as do the reading-the-list poems, with which they often overlap), where the readers of the poems know more, and with more assurance, than the readers in the poems, calling to mind other notions of suspense and withholding information, a very authorial and textual way to imagine the war and its mourners. Reading, and therefore text itself, comes to represent much of this war's complicated ideas of death, fiction, and news (this complex arrangement can be seen in some of the period's illustrations of wartime domestic scenes, where books and newspapers play a seemingly peripheral and yet also central part in the ways war was imagined). These novel-like poems, with their two different "meanwhile" frames, turn the poem into a version of a page-turner, a suspenseful novel, thereby calling our attention to textual conventions and their implications.

The following poem, "The Captain's Wife," by Theodore Tilton, in Pen-Pictures of the War, relays much about this imagined war's ideas of narrating, telling, and retelling ("half retold"), holding back, editing, in a loved one's "hand," interpreting, and guessing. Narratives of dying and death functioned as the bonds or links between battle and home, between chaos and meaning, between not knowing and knowing (see Faust, This Republic of Suffering 31, for a similar argument):
We gathered roses, Blanche and I, for little Madge one morning;
"Like every soldier's wife," said Blanche, "I dread a soldier's fate."
Her voice a little trembled then, as under some forewarning.
A soldier galloped up the lane, and halted at the gate.

"Which house is Malcolm Blake's?" he cried; "a letter for his sister!"
And when I thanked him, Blanche inquired, "But none for me, his wife?"
The soldier played with Madge's curls, and, stooping over, kissed her:
"Your father was my captain, child! --- I loved him as my life!"

Then suddenly he galloped off and left the rest unspoken.
I burst the seal, and Blanche exclaimed, --- "What makes you tremble so?"
What answer did I dare to speak? How ought the news be broken?
I could not shield her from the stroke, yet tried to ease the blow.

"A battle in the swamps," I said; "our men were brave, but lost it."
And, pausing there, --- "The note," I said, "is not in Malcolm's hand."
And first a flush flamed through her face, and then a shadow crossed it.
"Read quick, dear Mary! --- read all, I pray --- and let me understand!"

I did not read it as it stood, --- but tempered so the phrases,
As not at first to hint the worst, --- held back, the fatal word,
And half retold his gallant charge, his shout, his comrades' praises ---
Till like a statue carved in stone, she neither spoke nor stirred!

Oh, never yet a woman's heart was frozen so completely!
So unbaptized with helping tears! --- so passionless and dumb!
Spellbound she stood, and motionless, --- till little Madge spoke sweetly:
"Dear mother, is the battle done? and will my father come?"

I laid my finger on her lips, and set the child to playing.
Poor Blanche! the winter in her cheek was snowy like her name!
What could she do but kneel and pray, --- and linger at her praying?
O Christ! when other heroes die, moan other wives the same?

Must other women's heart must break, to keep the Cause from failing?
God pity our brave lovers then, who face the battle's blaze!
And pity wives in widowhood! --- But is it unavailing?
O Lord! give freedom first, then Peace! --- and unto Thee be praise!

This poem claims to be beyond words, it is a construction of words about words' failure,
about what lies beyond the bounds of words, what cannot be bound up in, what resists the
binding of, mere words. The letter-carrier/soldier admits that, when it comes to the key
piece of news he is there to convey --- a death --- he "left the rest unspoken." Though
contained in an elaborately constructed poem made of words, the characters in this poem
understand that death cannot be said; according to the poem, what is most urgent to say does not fit into words. Words fail at representation here; all that can be done is to gesture circuitously at words' meanings.

The poem is about reading aloud a letter from the war, and there are numerous mentions of ways that text and death are bound together. Reading of death here is an elliptical, uneven, incomplete reading. In the poem, death is news, and the soldier's sister wonders how this news ought to be broken to the soldier's wife. She opens the hoped for yet dreaded letter, the text of the soldier's death, and she reads it aloud. We read this reading in quotes, calling our attention to its textuality. The quoted reading is interrupted, forcing us as readers to think about this as a text, as a narrative that can be stopped. It is a telling, a fiction --- a made, crafted, bounded text. This telling pause is about the text of death itself, about the impossibility of telling or narrating death: "And, pausing there, --- 'The note,' I said, 'is not in Malcolm's hand.'" The reading aloud in the poem is paused, and the line of read poetry is then broken visually on the page as well, with an abrupt midline hyphen, both of which remind us of the textuality, of the crafted, read nature of this imagined war news. This is a telling pause, a pause that tells more than words can. And after the pause the narrator tells the letter's news elliptically, in shorthand. She notes in a seeming non sequitur that the note is not in the soldier's hand, which is meant to be interpreted as a sure sign of the soldier's death. The narrated letter, the text of the war, is interrupted in order to call our attention to the fact that the letter is written secondhand. The text is not self authored, which is meant to be interpreted as a sure sign of the soldier's death, marking this poetry's connections between text and death. "The Captain's Wife" goes on to present more connections between reading, text, and death. Ways of reading, and ways of delivering the news of death, are foregrounded in the lines

"Read quick, dear Mary! --- read all, I pray --- and let me understand!"
I did not read it as it stood, --- but tempered so the phrases,
As not at first to hint the worst, --- held back, the fatal word,
And half retold his gallant charge, his shout, his comrades' praises ---
Till like a statue carved in stone, she neither spoke nor stirred!

The imperatives to "[r]ead quick...read all...and let me understand!" point to the very textual nature of understanding in this imagined war. Reading is understanding here, yet the reading is presented as obscure, elliptical, and broken. And farther we read that the news read aloud is redacted:

I did not read it as it stood, --- but tempered so the phrases,
As not at first to hint the worst, --- held back, the fatal word,
And half retold his gallant charge, his shout, his comrades' praises ---

The narrating sister-in-law comes across here as an editor, as an emender of the text of war. She reads selectively, tempering phrases, half retelling key scenes, and holding back the fatal word, "dead." Her concern for the way the war text is read is predicated on the premise that the news or text of death needs to be edited, needs to be managed and interpreted. Here the text of war, the narrative of death, cannot be unmediated, it can only
be hinted at, held back, and half retold. The telling of trauma is never straightforward, and words defy their own meanings.

"The Captain's Wife" suggests that the pain of war death, though here expressed in a poem made of words --- indeed, words that call attention to their very status as words, as text --- is so great as to be beyond words, beyond articulation. The pain of war death is great, yet we are made to feel that the pain of the words that must be left unspoken would be even greater. That the soldier must "[leave] the rest unspoken" speaks to the pain contained in these potential words. (Leaving the rest unspoken also reminds us of the issue of suspense in so many of these war poems.) In this poem, text carries more weight than what might be expressed through text. The grieving wife here is "passionless and dumb," she is incapable of feeling, incapable of text. She stands "[s]pellbound," calling to mind her inarticulacy as well as notions of text and spellings, and being bound to text as well as the bonds of sentimentality.

Walt Whitman's "Come up from the Fields, Father," from Walt Whitman's Drum-Taps, is one of the better known war poems that imagines this complex sense of narrative time, where letters home lie, the poem's readers have more accurate knowledge than the poem's characters, and textual suspense is toyed with:

Come up from the fields, father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door, mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)
Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come, father, come at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry, mother, to the front door come right away.
Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name
is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son,
O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black,
she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast,
cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,
At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah, now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head,
very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

Grieve not so, dear mother (the just-grown
daughter speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd),
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.

Alas, poor boy, he will never be better (nor maybe
needs to be better, that brave and simple soul),
While they stand at home at the door he is
dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night
fitfully sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,

O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent
from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

In this poem, as in so many of the complex narrative-time war poems, the readers of the poem are left knowing more than those depicted in the poem, where, tellingly, the entire war experience for those at home is imagined as being about knowing.

Interestingly, the central position of knowing in the poem, the narrator, is ambiguously portrayed both as someone within the family as well as someone apart. We
read both "father," and then "the daughter" (emphasis mine), as if the narrator has a close and at the same time separate relationship vis-a-vis this family. This poetry's issues of textuality, split narrative time, and ways of knowing come up here in the narrator's ambiguous role, where he can seamlessly say, "...to me," "thy son," and "our son." This narrator's unique perspective as both chronicler and participant can also be seen when he says, "Ah, now, the single figure to me." What are we to make of this shifting narrative perspective? What does the narrator's tenuous connection to univocal textuality mean here?

Susan Stewart writes of Whitman's "Come up from the Fields, Father," "We see this gesture of individuation particularly powerfully in the lines describing the mother of the dead soldier reading the falsely consoling letter in 'Come up from the Fields Father.' Up until this point, the poem's perspective is structured by a dynamic between dramatic monologue, expressed as the voice of the daughter, sister of the soldier 'our Pete,' and the epic sweep of the poet's voice describing both broad vistas of sky and field and particular sense impressions --- the smell of the grape and the buckwheat; the sound of the bees buzzing around. The narrator moves urgently to the letter and stands within the mother's consciousness as she reads the actual words on the page. At this moment there is a conflation of the situation of the poet, the situation of the mother, and the situation of the reader of the poem. Suddenly, the voice of the poet is stripped of its anonymous omniscience:

Ah now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with its cities and farms
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

In these lines the view extends beyond the landscape into the supersensible realm of the state, a territory existing only in abstraction, and at the same time the speaker reaches deep into the physical feelings of the mother herself -- her white face taking on the mask of the many white faces of the dying and the dead in the sequence as a whole. 'Ah now the single figure to me' returns us to the deictic immediacy of the situation of the utterance of pain in the presence of another, the to me as compelling as the to me uttered by Caedmon's interlocutor." (Poetry and the Fate of the Senses 300–301)

Whitman's poem makes its grief a very textual grief, a read grief. Grief is rendered as text, and is felt textually: "...she catches the main words only:/Sentences broken...." The poem details a way of reading grief, of skimming, reading the main words only. Sentences are broken, incontinent, unbounded; the text is unclear, the news it brings unbelievable (recalling the failure of words and the telling pause in "The Captain's Wife" above). Adding to the poem's narrative complexity, the narrator is both in the story and the chronicler of the story, reminding us of the split-screen narratives of this war. The key fact of the poem --- the son's death --- is both known and unknown: "While they stand at home at the door, he is dead already" (emphasis mine). What does this "meanwhile" sense of time and simultaneity tell us about this war, about this era's ways of getting news? The compression of time and foreshortening of distance between those at home and those on the battlefield is alluded to in this line, where the bonds of sentiment are severed. The sense of simultaneity here shows us the complex, corrupt relationship
between death and reading that this war poetry details again and again. Getting accurate news, performing accurate readings, are repeatedly shown to be flawed enterprises in this war poetry. Prewar notions of sentimental bonds that defy time and space are attenuated and stretched to their breaking points during this war, according to the popular war poetry. Letters lie, texts confuse rather than console, and ways of knowing are unreliable and broken.

As Faust explains, for Civil War mourners, as well as for mourners in general during America's mid-nineteenth-century sentimental period, death is deemed "a satisfactory conclusion to life's narrative" (This Republic of Suffering 28), where life itself is seen in textual, literary terms, and death and reading share a unique relationship. These mourners sought, in essence, successful fiction, a believable fiction, which, though oxymoronic, is what most fiction readers crave. These poems point to the fact that, in reality, each individual death cannot be said, can never be put into accurate words. One's last moments are necessarily beyond words, beyond mimesis, giving the lie to much sentimental literature about death, and especially these many war poems about reading and death. Poems about soldiers' last words are always representations, they always necessarily produce a fictive, discursive event, even as they claim to be actual outpourings from the field. These poems highlight the very unknowability of death by calling our attention to this war's particular connections between text, reading, and death.

The poems are all about telling, about textualizing, that which cannot be told: death, the riddle "of which the slain/Sole solvers are" (Melville, "The Armies of the Wilderness," from Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War). These war poems imagine soldiers' mourners left at home, and for these mourners death is a mystery to be read, but never solved (reminding us of the suspenseful, novel-like reading-the-list poems in Chapter Two of this dissertation). Melville's poem "The Armies of the Wilderness" (italics in original) nears its end with,

None can narrate that strife in the pines,
A seal is on it --- Sabaean lore!
Obscure as the wood, the entangled rhyme
But hints at the maze of war ---
Vivid glimpses or livid through peopled gloom,
And fires which creep and char ---
A riddle of death, of which the slain
Sole solvers are.
Long they withhold the roll
Of the shroudless dead. It is right;
Not yet can we bear the flare
Of the funeral light.

"None can narrate that strife in the pines," and "entangled rhyme/But hints at the maze of war." Melville draws our attention to the limits of text, the inadequacy of words, the paucity of even the very poetry he has chosen to dedicate to describing war's deaths. He reminds his readers that his own moving war poetry, like all representations of war and trauma, can in the end only hint at the truth, can only tell it slant, to recall Emily Dickinson. Words --- here evocative verse that itself talks of narration --- will always fail
at fully capturing the reality of the lived experience of trauma and death. Death is not available to be narrated. It is obscure, and even all this effort in entangled rhyme, all these popular war poems, including Melville's own, can in the end merely hint at the maze of war trauma. As Faust explains it, "The dead have discovered as well the answer to the riddle that Melville cannot know, the riddle 'of which the slain/Sole solvers are.' Beginning in such innocence, they are brought by war to an ultimate knowledge that even their survivors lack. The living remain captured in uncertainty." (This Republic of Suffering 202--203) (Wittingly or not, Melville's mention of "[a] riddle of death" points again to the knotty relationship between death and text, as the word riddle stems from the word read; death as a riddle is a text that is meant to be decoded, to be read.)

Despite Melville's claims that war deaths are utterly unknowable and unsayable, many popular war poems create an imagined war, their setting the battle-field, where soldiers narrate their own deaths, reminding us that the act of writing, indeed textuality, is key to this war literature's understanding of itself. Poem after poem has a soldier, improbably, narrating his own death, foregrounding these poems' complex questions regarding knowing and not knowing in terms of death. So many of these poems blur the distinctions between knowing and not knowing, both for the characters in the poems as well as for the readers of the poems. Readers are compelled to ask, Is the soldier dead or not? Is he writing while dying? Is he merely sleeping?, not to mention the knowing or not knowing in terms of if the soldier has died at all, and if he has, where and when he died.

These poems' complex strategies of narrative time and the impossible present are couched as if the soldiers are writing a poem while dying, demonstrating the extreme textuality of this war. For instance, this line from "Will They Weep for Me at Home," by Walter Warren, in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War, conveys the very fictionality of these scenes, as a soldier is purportedly writing a poem while dying, penning, "Here I lie among the slain." (This image of lying among the slain also calls to mind lying among the names of the slain on a casualty list, as talked about in Chapter Two of this dissertation.) This conceit of writing while dying is everywhere in these poems, just one other example being the poem "Tell Mother I Die Happy," from the American Broadsides and Ephemera, Series I, where the soldier-narrator mentions, "I am dying...," making the war and war's death a text to be written and read, made manageable and bounded. Death is a story to be told, a fiction to be conveyed to readers.

As Fahs writes, "The most popular Civil War poems and songs...were those that turned away from battle and imagined the thoughts of individual soldiers." (103) She goes on to say that "Hundreds of popular songs and poems during the war grappled with the fact of mass, anonymous death by creating idealized deaths for soldiers. While numerous poems sought to aestheticize the dead body of the soldier on the site of his death, far more poems and songs gave voice to dying soldiers' thoughts," and, "These 'dying soldier' poems have traditionally been dismissed as 'mere' sentimentality, but that view obscures the importance of these poems within Civil War culture, allowing little means of analyzing the meanings of the war they shaped both north and south." (100) The personal, private grief in each dying soldier poem has been read as maudlin or "merely" sentimental, but, as Fahs notes and I hope to show, these poems in fact comment in complex ways on the era's anxieties about narrative, realism, nation, mourning, and sentiment.
Fahs connects these dying-soldier poems to sentimentality's notion of bonds, explicating the importance of the sentimental bond, or link, between these fictive soldier-poets and those who remain at home to read them. As she writes of these poems,

...not only did they ventriloquize the dying thoughts of soldiers, thereby countering the brutal anonymity of death, but they also allowed a form of communication between the imagined soldier and his listener --- in reality a reader on the home front. These poems imagined the soldier as an emotive and sympathetic figure, but they also, by implication, imagined the listener/reader on the home front as similarly emotive and sympathetic. Thus these poems imagined tight links between home front and battlefront, links that were in fact usually broken by the soldier's death far from home. (101)

The letters, and poems as letters, sent between the battlefield and home are texts that become the sentimental bonds, the "tight links," between battle and home. These writing-while-dying poems describe the moment of passing, the moment of death, this liminal, unknowable space marking the boundary of death. The poems present death as a literary/textual/fictional creation. But as the poems make clear, any knowledge that words, that narration, might convey is meaningless in describing the moment of an individual's death. These words, though presented as factual consolation, can only ever prove to be fictive, as no one knows, no one has sure knowledge in these poems about their loved ones' deaths. The consolations presented in these poems point up the fictiveness of the sentimental project of bonding and mourning. These poems' fictive last moments detail an impossible, yet repeatable, present, a scene of such temporal contradictions that we as readers are immediately alerted to its fictiveness.

The not knowing and the impossible present images that surround death in these poems call to mind Cathy Caruth's eloquent elucidations of the relationship between trauma and time. She writes that "What causes trauma, then, is a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind's experience of time...." (61) In her reading of Freud and Lacan, Caruth goes on to offer a compelling reading of knowing, fiction, time, survival, and trauma that speaks to so much of what I see in these Civil War poems. She writes: "For the father, Freud seems to imply, the knowledge of the death of his child can perhaps appear only in the form of a fiction or a dream. The dream thus tells the story of a father's grief as the very relation of the psyche to reality: the dream, as a delay, reveals the ineradicable gap between the reality of a death and the desire that cannot overcome it except in the fiction of a dream." (95), and, "The force of the trauma is not the death alone, that is, but the fact that, in his very attachment to the child, the father was unable to witness the child's dying as it occurred. Awakening, in Lacan's reading of the dream, is itself the site of a trauma, the trauma of the necessity and impossibility of responding to another's death." (100) Adequately witnessing and responding to another's death, as these Civil War poems insist we do, is always impossible, and these war poems express this wish and a simultaneous anxiety over its impossibility in their nuanced accounts of both the story of death as well as the
very limitations of this story. The words of the poems' narratives both convey meaning as well as call attention to their inability to mark and make meaningful connections.

These Civil War poems' assumptions about sure knowledge and the power of texts and reading are what I plan to parse here. The mourners in the poems can only imagine what a loved one's last moments were like, can only create fiction, more words, more texts. The poems are only able to picture forth the suspense, the search, the reading of the lists. And these soldiers-writing-while-dying poems ensure that reading, writing, and text are seen as integral components of this war.

We read the dead again in "A Wounded Soldier's Soliloquy," by E. C. Breton, in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War, a poem couched as a letter sent from the dead, where the poet-soldier claims, "I know I'm dying now," spotlighting the impossible and imagined but apparently endlessly appealing (part of the definition of fiction itself) trope of the dead soldier composing a poem/letter that gets sent back to his loved ones. The entire poem reads:

Two days and nights, upon the field I've laid;
A hundred times at least, to God I've prayed
That to some surgeon I might be conveyed,
    That he might ease my pain.
I cannot wait much longer, and I fear
That I will have to draw my last breath here;
My wife, my family and my home so dear,
    To see no more again.

To leave us thus to suffer, is indeed unkind;
They ne'er should leave the wounded men behind.
But try at least, some shady place to find,
    Where we might wait for aid.
If help don't come to this poor soldier soon,
He'll shortly fall into his long last swoon:
If he's not helped, he'll surely die by noon;
    He'll die but partly by the blade.

Perhaps our comrades do now all they can;
These are but the ravings of a dying man;
Not a soul to talk with, and no one to fan
    The heat from off my brow.
The way we fought the battle, Time can ne'er erase,
And now we're wounded, death stares us in the face.
I feel I'm falling into death's embrace,
    I know I'm dying now

This poem's conceit of writing while dying, where again death and the words, text, record, reading, and writing of death are conflated, is so transparently fictive, yet apparently endlessly appealing, as this is just one of many poems picturing forth this same scene. What do these poems tell us? Most all poems and most all fiction is premised
on the idea of craft, of invention, yet many of these Civil War poems seem to want to be read as news, as fact, as certain knowledge, as installments from the field, as pictures of the war, and we are persuaded to read them as "real" in some way. This calls to mind Wordsworth's lines referenced earlier by Breitweiser in a quote by Finseth; that is, that poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility." We can see here that war poetry claiming to be penned live, from battle, puts pressure on the Romantic idea of poetry as composed in tranquility, even if originating from an outpouring or overflow of "live" experiences or feelings.

The "impossibly present" war poems put us very much in the moment, and yet in so doing, call attention to their very impossibility, their createdness, their fictiveness. Indeed, what I am calling the "impossible present" war poems point out the intricacies that a weaving of realism with sentimentality produced in this period. These impossibly present poems mark a moment when the wish of sentimental bonding --- to be there fully in witnessing and knowing another's death --- comes up against the reality of the unknowability of death that the war, with its many, many dead, made pressing and vivid.

These poems in the impossible present narrate death as if live, and in so doing make evident the very impossibility of knowing and articulating any death. Cavitch writes of "the idea that all elegies --- indeed all mourning arts --- are about the struggle to make the most out of some sign of the inarticulable, the trace of the loss that abides in our most inaccessible lives." (15)

Popular war poems where soldiers narrate their own deaths are about the unrecorded, unwitnessed, unheard last words of soldiers dying on the battlefield, and the fictions in these poems step in to fill a void created on the home front by the faraway soldier, replacing the missing, unheard last words with repeatable, rereadable, and clearly fictive words. That so many of these nearly identical poems were published speaks to their popularity. These many dying soldier poems offer a story, over and over again, of the scene of an individual dying in war, a story for those reading at home to take in, to metabolize, and to feel comforted by. In Harper's Weekly's "Home-News in Battle-Time," 23 April 1864, we read the minute details of a dying scene, imbued with readerly images:

Beside his musket an unopened letter lay ---
A message from the home which now, alas!
Must be forever dark because of this sad day.
"Read to me, Corporal," he said at last ---
"Read me what Mary says; I shall die happier so;"

***

They read him, as he wished, the precious lines ---

***

There, where he fell, they scooped a shallow grave,
And with her letter on his heart, so cold and calm,
Left him to wait the roll-call of the brave

Here text and war wounding and death are intermingled from the opening line: "Beside his musket an unopened letter lay ---," where a musket and a letter lay side by side next to
a dying soldier. The soldier eventually dies, and he is buried "with her letter on his heart," further mingling death and text. The poem lists the many times the dying soldier wants to be read to as he is dying --- "'Read to me," "'Read me," and "They read him" --- reminding us of the constant presence of text in this imagined war's deaths, as well as suggesting at some point that the soldier's comrades even "read him," or made of his death itself a text to be read.

The obviously fictive scenes in this poem make the war a narrative. In recreating the war, the poems fictionalize it, textualize it, but with poem titles that seem to suggest live reportage, putting the reader "there," making the poems seem real, almost photographic. These poems promote the idea of being there, and the impossible present in some of these poems speaks to the idea of suspense in reading, the wanting and not wanting certain knowledge, and the creation of fiction in the midst of this suspense and narrative expectation. This sense of "being there" found in the poems also reminds us of the foreshortening of time and space --- the rupturing of sentimental bonds --- that the telegraph and Associated Press (both vehicles for actual news) enacted. Getting "live" news, getting a story or narrative (albeit a fictional one, in verse) of those dying far away, helped foster the illusion of the maintenance of sentimental bonds, while simultaneously rendering those bonds clearly fictive.

Just one of many examples of a complexly layered narrative perspective poem from this period is "A Soldier's Letter," from the New York Evangelical, April 1863:

Dear Madam, I'm a soldier, and my speech is rough and plain, I'm not much used to writing, and I hate to give you pain, But I promised that I'd do it --- he thought it might be so If it came from one who loved him, perhaps 'twould ease the blow --- By this time you must surely guess the truth I fain would hide, And you'll pardon a rough soldier's words, while I tell you how he died. *** And then he said, "Dear Robert, it may be that I shall fall, And will you write to them at home, how I loved and spoke of all." *** So when he found that he must go, he called me to his bed, And said, "You'll not forget to write when you hear that I am dead, And you'll tell them how I loved them, and bid them all good-bye!"

This poem is about the role of text in this war, where writing, letters, and quoted speech are made much of. Here the dead soldier's narrative is imbedded in layers of text (the poem, the telling of his request, and then the quoted words themselves), reminding us again of the centrality of text in these poems and in this imagined war's conception of itself, where writing, death, and mourning are inextricably bound. The narrator of this poem retells how his fellow soldier requests that he write a letter about his death for his family, should he die before him. The poem is punctuated by quoted dialogue, making it feel very "live," as well as very textual, a seeming paradox that so many of these war poems play up. This poem has a novel-like feel to it, as if we are reading a story in all its minutiae, thereby calling our attention to ideas of narrating and telling a story second- and thirdhand. "A Soldier's Letter" foregrounds text in many ways, as it is about letters,
writing, and the relaying of a story of a death, relying on complex notions of a sense of story, narrative, fiction, and the distance and emotional bonds that text (letters) were meant to bridge in this era.

What are we to make of this novel-like, entirely fabricated, forged, fictive world with its elaborate "real-life" fictions? What is it about poetry as compared with novels or short stories that makes this "live" feel possible? How can a clearly crafted, genteel form like sentimental verse feel "live," and of the moment? How do these poems achieve both a narrative, suspenseful arc as well as the feel of a live dispatch? The vignette-like quality of these poems, which are part letter, part song, puts them in this unique place in terms of both suspense and "newsiness," or live feeling. The "writing while dying" poems of this war present themselves as of the moment, from the field, not a product of reflection composed in tranquility. It obviously would not be as believable to claim a novel or short story were "live," since they are so clearly crafted over time (and often read over time, in installments). Yet these live poems are clearly marked as fiction in that they, too, as a novel would be, are obviously crafted and composed. The impossibly present war poems both do and do not adequately represent war death, they are both true and fictive. These poems play with notions of realism and art, calling attention to both the true feelings they portray and help shape, as well as their absolute textuality.

Kete investigates "...the teleology of narrative and the teleology of sentiment," (89) exploring how sentiment affects the movement through time of fiction in "...the way that the mode of sentiment inflects the genre of the lyric. Conventionally, lyrics are understood to work against or to stop the movement of time by fully representing one experiential status. But, as I have suggested and as these readings show, the mode of sentiment works to establish connections across the distances of time. The mode of sentiment, then, infuses into lyric one of the definitive aspects of narrative (temporal movement) without converting the lyric into a story." (57) We can see the movement of, and connections across, time in the sentimental poems of the war, where an absolutely live moment such as death is shaped into an experience that both and cannot be witnessed, represented, and shared across time.

These war poems are metered stanzas, yet they employ prosaic, novel-like devices and tropes, which invite reading strategies normally reserved for stories or novels. There are many poems published during the war that tell a story as if the poet/soldier is there, as if the poems are live dispatches or news, yet the poems' bylines or datelines baldly give the lie to these claims. Diffley writes about the momentous changes before and during the Civil War in the country's sense of neighborhoods and travel, in Associated Press wires, in the post office and railroads, in the new art of photography, and in magazine war illustrations, and she details how all these Civil War--era innovations inflected and shaped the period's ideas of narrative (xliii--xlv). She recounts ideas about representations of time and the episodic nature of periodical stories as tied to the postwar reorganization of the post office, offering ways to think about how these war poems represent time, where battle scenes and battle deaths are described as if live, and other poems where readers know more than the loved ones in the poems who are left waiting for news. These "live" seeming poems are related to the era's innovations in the post, telegraphs, and photographs in the way that they compress time and space, just as, I am arguing, many of these complexly layered narrative poems collapse and also foreground issues of fiction and ideas of suspense. In these seemingly "live" poems it is as if you are
meant to be there while you read; and in the "meanwhile" poems that toy with narrative time it is as if you, the reader, know more about the loved ones in the poem than those in the poem who are endlessly searching for this information.

What are we to make of these poems that present themselves as "live" dispatches, as unmediated outpourings from the field, as letters supposedly sent home? What do their claims to authenticity mean in terms of textuality? Dillon writes that this type of unmediated outpouring "exposes [sentimentalism] as false or mediated by culture rather than immediate, and thus as constraining rather than liberating." (516) These poems call our attention to ways of reading and to layers of mediated textuality, while at the same time scenes of death and dying are portrayed, impossibly, as live, calling attention to their inherent falsity. These complexly narrated and layered time poems set out to rewrite, edit, and reimagine war and war's carnage. As Faust writes, "...soldiers wrote letters home about comrades' deaths that resisted and reframed war's carnage." ("The Civil War and the Art of Dying" 22) The war poems and the fictional texts they imagine domesticate and fictionalize the war, highlighting notions of interpretation, forcing us to consider the possible choices that texts offer in terms of thinking about the nation and the individual. These narratively complicated war poems offer ways to read the war. They are in essence a primer on war by noncombatants, where reading the war is privileged over incorporating it into the body. Text is more valuable than actual combat. These poems call the war into being, they give it life, through acts of writing and acts of reading.

The very private, lonely scene of reading, not knowing, and creating fiction is presented in this corpus of poems as a national exercise that defies sectionality in wartime. Early poems of the war told of soldiers' deaths in a straightforward, patriotic way, with these deaths merely part of stock scenes of national fervor fulfilled. These earlier, more univocal poems quickly faded as the war went on, giving way to hundreds of poems about the anguish and conflict of these war deaths, both for the mourners as well as for the soldiers. Fahs claims that, "As deaths in actual battles mounted, and as it became clear that the war would last far longer than had initially been assumed, the popular literary response to wartime death began to shift and expand, however." (89) The poems later in the war paint a much more complicated picture of wartime death, folding complex questions of textuality and suspense into depictions of soldiers dying on the battlefield and in the hospital.

Knowing, not knowing, suspense, and creating fiction all come together in a popular poem of the period, "Waiting for News!," from the Continental Monthly, 1 September 1863 (a poem whose very title gestures at the era's concern with news, realism, and fiction):

Waiting, O Father! a fond mother waiting,  
Waiting so anxious, the dark tide's abating!  
Waiting all breathless, in agonized anguish,  
Living by heart-throbs that spring up --- then languish;  
Catching each sound that comes back from the battle,  
Dark shrieks and groans and the lonely death rattle,  
Imagining visions of feverish thirsting ---  
Hearts in their utterest loneliness bursting!
Now I am waiting to know if he's wounded ---
Waiting to know --- how my fears must be bounded:
Closed his eyes may be to sorrow and danger ---
Dead he may be in the land of the stranger!

Pity me, pity me! Send consolation!

With a lack of information regarding their loved ones' fate, potential mourners resort to "[i]imagining visions," while "waiting to know." Accurate words are lacking, fiction (in a poem nominally about news) fills in the missing details, and the only consolation sought is sure knowledge. ("Into the feelings of waste and futility represented by so many foreshortened young lives, funeral sermons injected the consolation of narrative, of a story with a purposeful trajectory and an ending that showed death was never premature but always came at exactly the right time in accordance with God's design." (Faust 164)) Here, as elsewhere in these poems, knowing and not knowing are both fiction's and death's defining characteristics.

The popular war poems traffic in assumptions about sure knowledge versus fiction, and the fiction of the very idea of sure knowledge, especially concerning death. The poems draw our attention to the fictions --- the texts, the words --- that we comfort ourselves with in the face of others', and finally our own, death. The poems remind us of the notion of the immortality of words --- that is, that words by and about you, your story, will live on after you die, that the words that compose you, write you, in life and after death, are, more than anything else, what your legacy will be. The poems highlight the very textuality of death. They write the dead, answering the suspense of death with text, with words, writing in and over the void of death with memorializing words. As Susan Stewart writes, "As the beginning of 'Reconciliation' resolutely claims, the mark of the word endures beyond all violence and mortality: 'Word over all, beautiful as the sky,/Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost.' This is an idea we have encountered in many forms --- the hope of the sonnet writer that his work will outlast 'the gilded monuments' or withstand the force of the sea." (Poetry and the Fate of the Senses 302)

Words, texts, and anthologies are in fact a kind of death, a kind of memorial, a capturing, even a burial of sorts. The Civil War poem anthologies capture, contain, and bind the deaths that these poems memorialize (as I will talk about more fully in this dissertation's conclusion). The "live" dispatch poems and the complexly layered narrative time poems stand in juxtaposition to the boundedness and fixity of their anthologies. The poems claim to be there at the moment of death, relating the actual experience, which can never truly be known (the poems seem to even highlight the fictiveness of this wish), while the anthologies contain these fictions for consolation, for memorial, allowing readers to read them, even sing them, over and over once they have been contained and bound in a book.

These popular, sentimental war poems focus our attention on unsettling ideas of war, fiction, poetry, affectional bonds, certainty, and consolation, gesturing toward the larger questions of this war, which concern themselves with knowing and not knowing,
with suspense, with getting news and making fiction, and with texts, reading, and writing. Questions about the end of life, about death, are always necessarily also questions about fiction, and these poems again and again point this out by making reading and text so central to their concerns about war and war's deaths.

To know, to have some kind of sure knowledge about the life and death of one's loved and faraway soldier, is key in these sentimental poems about bonds and war. Though not published in the popular press during the war era, many of Emily Dickinson's poems from the war years explore the dangers of attachment and sentimental bonding. We can read Dickinson's preoccupation with anguish and loss in light of her massive output during the war years; that is, one can argue that the loss and death and mourning of the war spurred Dickinson to write as many poems as she had written yet (her "flood years"), poems that, however elliptically, explore many of the same issues of suspense, sure knowledge, death, and sentimental bonds that the popular, contemporaneous sentimental poems published all around her were exploring. As Shira Wolosky writes, "Death in particular had always seemed the epitome of incomprehensible sorrows and sudden blows. War intensified this image." (Emily Dickinson: A Voice of War 41) The dissolution of sentimental bonds played a large part in Dickinson's poetry, as also noted by Wolosky when she writes, "The common suffering of departure and death was sufficiently incomprehensible. With the war, Dickinson was faced with a compelling threat of unaccountable interruptions, losses, and massacres. Had the world not seemed to her a disrupted place before, it certainly would appear so after 1861." (37) Wolosky goes on to explore issues of knowing and doubt in Dickinson's poetry when she writes, "religious promises remained an uncertain assurance and the divine will, mysterious:

Some we see no more, Tenements of Wonder
Occupy to us though perhaps to them
Simpler are the Days than the Supposition
Their removing Manners
Leave us to presume

That oblique Belief which we call Conjecture
Grapples with a Theme stubborn as Sublime
Able as the Dust to equip its feature
Adequate as Drums
To enlist the Tomb.

The dead are seen no more, as they pass to a world about which the living continue to wonder in ignorance. Perhaps to the dead, their new state seems simple and unmysterious. But those left behind remain with only the 'Supposition' that death occasions. The dead may understand their own removal. The living can only imagine and presume.

Death, then, poses a problem which cannot be resolved with any certainty --- a problem, Dickinson suggests, equally arising from the 'Dust' of the grave in general (which here, as able 'to equip,' acquires a military resonance) and from the 'Drums' of war in particular. The 'oblique Belief' in immortality is only 'Conjecture' and finally does not
assuage doubts and fears. Dickinson restates this uncertainty in an elegy for Francis Dickinson, the first Amherst war death:

If pride shall be in Paradise ---
Ourself cannot decide ---
Of their imperial Conduct ---
No person testified ---

A promise of paradise does not resolve the poet's doubts. As an answer, it is much less certain than the fact of death it attempts to explain." (42--43)

According to Dickinson, those who have died (the "Some we see no more") exist for us now only in conjecture, in story, in fiction (they are "Tenements of Wonder" who live on only in "That oblique Belief which we call Conjecture"). In Dickinson, the promise of sure knowledge that sentimental bonding offers is shown to be more fraught than it might seem, just as, in less immediately recognizable ways, it is also shown to be in many of the popular war poems.

The popular war poems call our attention to the idea of reading as related to ideas of knowing, sure knowledge, fiction, news, and the ways the many poems depict experiencing the war through reading. According to the poems' assumptions, reading is the path to sure knowledge, and experience is suspect (just as in the reading-the-list poems, (talked about farther on in this dissertation) potential mourners in the poem read the lists to know, and they rely on this kind of knowing more than other ways of knowing). In these poems, reading is about certain knowledge, but it is also clearly about fiction, about falsehood (e.g., "Will They Weep for Me at Home?"'s line, "Here I lie among the slain"). The poems' ideas of fiction and sure knowledge bear directly on this era's sentimentality and its concern with bonds, knowing, separations, and death. The poems implicitly remind us that death is something that can only ever be imaginatively known and conveyed; narrating death is the ultimate act of fiction, as the living can only ever know about death through suspense, imagination, fiction, conjecture, and surmise. When it comes to this poetry's central topic --- the death of loved soldiers --- no certain knowledge is available to readers or mourners, yet these poems want to offer certain knowledge and the consolation it brings, they want to portray an intelligible, legible ending to life's narrative.

The narratives in these poems provide the missing conclusions to life's narratives, the missing last words and descriptions of death. This search for conclusions, for definite knowledge, is the concern of both fiction and mourning. The poems are aware of, indeed they foreground, their own fictiveness, calling attention to the falsity of the consolation we as readers (both in the poems and of the poems) seek, especially in wartime. In Whitman's "Come up from the Fields, Father," among other poems, the end of the poem makes clear the sham, the fiction, and the sorrow attendant on the news of the fictiveness of this consolation. As Faust explains it, this poem imagines "...a loss known only through the abstractions of language." (This Republic of Suffering 29) Indeed, it is a loss that generates an excess of language, recalling Kete's and others' comments about the paradox of sentimentality, which relies on loss to generate excess, both in language and in tokens of suffering. This excess of language attempts to convey the riddle of death, that which, as Melville tells us, the "the slain/Sole solvers are." What can be contained, or
bound, in language, what can be known, comprehended, read, "solved" through language in these poems is interrogated and called into question. What is striking about these poems, Whitman's being the most well-known example, is the way they highlight the very failure of language to convey, yet the poems, in their vast numbers as well as in their ornate, novel-like narratives, are built on the idea of an overabundance of language. The poems point to a failure of language to convey war's grief, at the same time that so many of the poems portray a very language-based, text-based effort to contain the trauma of war.

The narrative time issue that so many poems evidence, where the words of the poem, though in the present tense, impossibly record death, which can never actually be conveyed or known to others, calls our attention to the very impossibility of the yearning that these poems exhibit, and in so doing offer fictional text as consolation for this empty place of not knowing. The war-poem narrators attempt to know with certainty the last thoughts, last words, last experiences of dying loved ones, and they foreground the impossibility of this, showing up the fictionality of these attempts. These poems enact the sentimental trope that affectional bonds will last, will bring us sure knowledge, yet the transparent fictiveness of these complexly narrated poems belie this yearning, this desire for sure knowledge, and point out the falsity of this sentimental ideal, while still, in their sheer numbers, offering some kind of acceptance or comfort, if only in textual, readerly bonds rather than affectional ones.

Drew Gilpin Faust writes about Emily Dickinson's war poetry in terms of belief and unbelief, the failure of knowledge, modernity, and sure knowledge/evidence versus sentimental bonds/bounded questions and answers (This Republic of Suffering 206--207). Another war poet who probes sentimentalism's perspective on knowing and suspense is Sarah Piatt. Tyler Hoffman writes, "Mellville and Piatt effectively shatter the romance of war through a fierce realism that peels back the veneer of glory and through a subtle irony that punctures sentimental creeds and conventions." (81) A poem that excavates this war poetry's concerns about knowing, curiosity, and sure knowledge, but in an unexpected way, is Piatt's "Hearing the Battle," where knowing and not knowing acquire complex valences.

"Hearing the Battle --- July 21, 1861," by Sarah Morgan Bryan Piatt, from The Nests at Washington and Other Poems (1864), reads,

One day in the dreamy summer,
On the Sabbath hills, from afar
We heard the solemn echoes
Of the first fierce words of war.

Ah, tell me, thou veiled Watcher
Of the storm and the calm to come,
How long by the sun or shadow
Till these noises again are numb.

And soon in a hush and glimmer
We thought of the dark, strange fight,
Whose close in a ghastly quiet
Lay dim in the beautiful night.

Then we talk'd of coldness and pallor,
    And of things with blinded eyes
That started at the golden stillness
    Of the moon in those lighted skies;

And of souls, at morning wrestling
    In the dust with passion and moan,
So far away at evening
    In the silence of world unknown.

But a delicate wind beside us
    Was rustling the dusky hours,
As it gather'd the dewy odors
    Of the snowy jessamine-flowers.

And I gave you a spray of blossoms,
    And said, "I shall never know
How the hearts in the land are breaking,
    My dearest, unless you go."

Piatt opens her poem with the lines "from afar/We heard the solemn echoes/of the first fierce words of war" (emphasis mine), inviting us to consider the connections during this period between text and war, even if the words are mere echoes from afar. The sentimental bonds that text is often portrayed as enabling, as well as the image of this war itself as a sentimental text the reading of which will bind the nation back together, is ironized by Piatt in the last stanza of "Hearing the Battle," where she writes,

And I gave you a spray of blossoms,
    And said, "I shall never know
How the hearts in the land are breaking,
    My dearest, unless you go."

Here the bonds of sentiment are turned on their head, as the narrator tells her lover to go to war so that she can know how the other hearts in the land are breaking. The typical literary sentimental moment of grieving separation and affectional bonds is here overturned, as the narrator of the poem seeks a knowledge of the nation's grief by ironizing sentimental attachments.

Hoffman writes, "In her verse Piatt recuperates the experience of those marginalized in and by the war and interrogates the certainties about war that pervaded poetry in her day. Like Mellville's, her Civil War poetry does a different kind of cultural work than most, aiming to 'undeceive' us about the nature of war and its aftermath as well as about the ideologies that shape these events," (72) and, "Piatt is especially effective enacting gendered distances from war, complicating through her tonal postures the relation between soldier and civilian, theater of war and domestic sphere." (73)
According to Hoffman, "In 'Hearing the Battle' Piatt measures the sentimentalism and shrill patriotism that some women perform to commit soldiers to their deaths, undercutting that ideology with a fierce and foreign irony." (74)

Another instance of a poem that works to show up this sentimental war poetry's very formulaic qualities, belying any of its claims to authenticity, yet all the while showcasing some of the parodied poetry's very same ideas of fiction and narrative time, is "A Hint to Poets: Showing How to Make a War Song," from *Vanity Fair*, 8 March 1862:

I. 
The air is glad with banded life  
   And gay with pomp of stripes and stars!  
(Here, for the rhyme, you'll mention "strife,"  
   And happily allude to "Mars.")  
A nation musters to the field,  
   Truth to maintain and wrong to right!  
(Here promise that the foe shall yield,  
   And promise it with all your might.)

II. 
Rebellion rears its rampant head,  
   And Hate lets loose the dogs of war,  
(Here speak about the "gory bed"  
   Where heroes are provided for.)  
But while the hearts of freeman beat,  
   And while their hands can wield the sword ---  
(Describe them pouring "leaden sleet,"  
   And falling on the "traitor horde.")

III. 
God's lightning rifts the battle gloom!  
   The souls of heroes lead us on!  
(Here touch on Vernon's sacral tomb,  
   And bones of glorious Washington.)  
The listening nations hold their breath,  
   And guardian angels throng the sky ---  
(Here talk of "Liberty or Death,"  
   And say "we conquer or we die.")

IV. 
The destinies of all the race  
   Hang on the issue of the hour;  
(Here give considerable space  
   To sneers at royal pomp and power.)  
For in the West is Freedom's star,  
   And in the West is Freedom's crown;  
(Here say that scepters near and far,
As also thrones, must tumble down.)

V.
For, face to face and hand to hand,
   We'll beat the dastard traitors back;
   (Allude here to "our native land,"
   And, by the way, to "glory's track.")
Till once again from sea to sea
   Our starry Flag shall proudly fly!
   (Here swell "the anthem of the free,"
   And don't forget to swell it high.)

VI.
And when at last the foot of Truth
   Has crushed Rebellion's serpent head,
   (Here someway you must speak of "youth,"
   Though any rhyme will do instead.)
She'll hurl her lightning from the sun
   And break the chains of all the world!
   (And that will do --- for all is done
   When once the lightning's safely hurled.)

This parodic poem mocks the war era's entire poetic enterprise, mocks the hundreds and hundreds of poems written during the war that were about the war. The anonymous poet makes of these poems more of a fill-in-the-blank exercise, poking fun at both these kinds of poems, and at the idea of kind, or genre, in general, making genre's defining characteristic --- repeatability --- a joke. (Cavitch makes an interesting claim regarding the similarity of genre and death in his book American Elegy: The Poetry of Mourning from the Puritans to Whitman, arguing that death and mourning, like genre, are by definition repeatable things that defy easy categorization or summation. His argument about death and genre is very helpful to think about when considering these Civil War poems, which are entirely generic, and yet are about the unique, yet repeatable, and unknowable, experience of individual death.) "A Hint to Poets" is yet another example of the sheer textuality of this war in the popular press. In its fill-in-the-blanks feel, this parody makes the claim that all these war poems are indeed only formula, only text in the most minimal sense, not felt words chosen with any sense of craft to translate any kind of real feeling. This parody implies that the hundreds of popular Civil War poems amount to a making of the war into empty text, empty verbal gestures, where meaning is evacuated and replaced with easy, repeatable, empty form/formality/genre, further asserting the very impossibility of real knowing, real communication, through the use of overtly empty, meaningless tropes.

This war and its unprecedented carnage were said to beggar all description. Words were said to fail in this context, and in failing they left a larger chasm of unknowing, of incomprehensibility. Faust writes that "...Civil War death and devastation also planted seeds of a more profound doubt about the human ability to know and understand....the failure of the uniquely human capacity of language...." (This Republic of
This failure of language, and hence a failure of knowing, speaks to what I see as this war's powerful collapsing of death and war and textuality. According to Faust, "The living searched in anxiety and even 'phrensy' to provide endings for life narratives that stood incomplete, their meanings undefined. This crisis of knowledge and understanding extended well beyond the problem of the unidentified dead to challenge, in Melville's words, 'the very basis of things.'" (267) Yet poem after poem, anthology after anthology, would seem to say differently, as they sought, through various complicated narrative strategies, to contain and explain the war and all its death through textual description.

Faust writes of the contemporary feeling of expressive helplessness, of verbal incapacity, in the face of so much death: "Language would in no way express the true picture as it really was." (209) This failure of text, this failure of depiction, appears within the texts of the poem themselves, as when we read "No pen can paint the strife" in "Allatoona," from *Harper's Weekly*, 10 December 1864. The war poems often convey a sense of "you had to be there." So what then is poetry's role? What is the role of depiction, of text, where all depiction, all language is suspect? These poems are a very mediated, a very much not-there art form, yet they are couched as live dispatches purporting to be "true fiction." This failure of language, this failure of narration and text, becomes precisely the lens through which the war was viewed in poem after poem, in anthology preface after anthology preface.

Faust claims that the war's "[s]uffering exceeded language and understanding," (209) yet I would claim that it was not that it exceeded language so much as that it became abundantly textualized. This war's suffering and death were made hypertextual, were made into the ultimate sentimental text. Faust writes that, "Like Melville, the soldiers found war beyond narration." (209) Rather than beyond narration, I am suggesting that they, and the war's poets and poetry readers, made everything into narration, they made everything textual. There are texts within texts, as many poems are about fictional letters and poems sent home. This war poetry makes uneven, injured bodies into text; it makes the scored, scarred land into text; it makes the mourning heart into a text; and it eventually makes the previously divided nation into a whole, readable text in the war-poem anthologies.
Chapter Two: Reading, Listing, and Lettering the Dead: "...and they wrote him 'dead'"

Many popular Civil War poems are about experiencing the war through reading, through texts. These poems often portray a woman or family reading a list of the war's dead and missing, a list that was received in the mail or posted on a bulletin; or they receive a letter containing such a list. The reading pictured in these poems is an anxious reading full of dread and despair, and these poems seemed to be endlessly appealing. What does this subgenre of reading-the-list poems dealing with reading and mourning tell us? What mattered about these poems? What are they saying that struck such a chord? What was the pull for so many readers in thinking about receiving a letter during this war? What do these poems have to say about war, about severed families and severed ties, about the place of sentimentality within war poems? The reading-the-list poems confuse categories of news with personal letters as well as with the reported last words of soldiers that are seemingly transcribed "live" from the battlefield. This poetry conflates getting news with reading personal letters, highlighting notions of "live" news, words' inadequacy, and the bonds of sentiment that reading was seen as promoting in this period.

I would like to look at this hugely popular (and now forgotten) category of poems and songs that helped shape people's experience of the war. Fear, news, mourning, and reading are bound together repeatedly in these reading-the-list poems. For example, in the poem "The Vacant Place," in Harper's Weekly, 10 June 1865, we read:

Then quick came the news of a battle,
And our hearts with fear were stirred,
And the hope which had warmed my bosom
Grew all of a sudden stilled,
When at last one morn from a paper,
Where the words seemed strangely blurred,
I read the name of our hero
In a long, long list of the killed.

In this poem, the experience of knowing about death, and of mourning, is intimately bound with reading. Reading the poem here about reading the news makes the fear and mourning of those at home during the Civil War tightly bound to text. In this poem, as in many popular poems of the war, one's loved one's fate is portrayed as nearly as important as the fact that it is being read, both within the poem as a list in the morning paper, and then as the poem itself. These war poems present a very read grief, a textual mourning. The narrator of this poem sums up her grief by simply describing how she read a "long, long list of the killed," "Where the words seemed strangely blurred." This is an obscure reading, a reading blurred and obscured by tears as well as by inference and indirection. The mourning here is alluded to circuitously. It is enough for the narrator of the poem to say she has read her loved soldier's name in a list, a reading blurred by tears. That her soldier is read means that he is dead, according to the poem. All the fear, grief, and mourning of this war is succinctly expressed here in an intimate scene of reading. Reading is knowing, is mourning, according to this poem.
There are countless Civil War poems about those who wait forever --- where waiting is not knowing, where there is no sure knowledge, only suspense --- while we as readers know their waiting is bootless (for example in the poem "Searching for the Dead and Wounded" in New York Illustrated News). Even the (then unpublished) war verse of Emily Dickinson exhibits this concern with reading and mourning. As Shira Wolosky writes:

The only News I know
Is Bulletins all Day
From Immortality  [827]

[This poem] can be called a war poem with certainty only because it was written in a letter to Higginson, in which Dickinson was panic stricken after reading in the Republican that he had been wounded." (Emily Dickinson: A Voice of War 41--42) Dickinson also writes about lists and their connection to reading and death during this war. As Wolosky writes, "...if the evil of death made her question God's 'Perturbless Plan,' then the great evil of war certainly could not be justified by appeal to the divine will, which, as she writes elsewhere, enters the many war dead on its 'Repealless List.'" (45)

Many of these war poems imagine ways of waiting for word, where a soldier's name is the word waited for, and where the soldier's life and death are thereby translated to text, a narrative to read. Reading and text are imagined in these poems as part of the war effort itself, and in many poems we read about how reading the papers makes up a large part of the war effort for those who remain at home, as seen for example in this line from the poem "I Wouldn't --- Would You?" in Harper's Weekly, 23 August 1862, where reading and corporeality are casually conflated: "Who doesn't now read the papers/More than ever he read before;/Eagerly watching the symptoms/Of our great political sore?"

This image appears again in the poem "Thanksgiving," from Harper's Weekly, 13 December 1862: "I know who search every paper through/To see if my name be there." In poem after poem, those who wait at home during the war are imagined as experiencing all the grief and physical pain of the war via reading. The war is translated to text --- the ultimate sentimental text --- in these poems, and those fighting the battles, both as soldiers as well as those at home, are imagined as reading themselves into grief. Their pain and mourning are made readable, they are put to words.

These popular war poems detail ways of waiting for word, where "dead" is the word waited for, and where death is thereby made into a text, a narrative or story to read. "The Return" from the Continental Monthly, 1 April 1863, conveys this entire sentiment in one succinct line: "A word at last! --- they found him dead." The telling stanza in this poem reads,

July, --- what is the news they tell?
A battle won: our eyes are dim,
And sad forbodings press the heart
Anxious, awaiting news from him.
Hour drags on hour: fond heart, be still,
Shall evil tidings break the spell?
A word at last! --- they found him dead;

Though the news tells of a battle won, the readers who look for only one name amidst all the other news are still anxious and awaiting. Again, this war as read in these poems is a very textual, readerly war, where waiting, anxiety, and finding words (the poem's phrasing is interesting here --- "they found him dead" --- where it is as if they deemed him dead, they decided he was dead, and called or named (textualized) him as such) --- all very readerly actions --- are foremost. Here a word arrives at last, and the word is "dead." In this poem, the dead soldier becomes a word, he is translated to a much-waited-for bit of text. Indeed, in Harper's Weekly's poem "News from the Front," 11 June 1864, as in so many of these war poems about waiting for and getting news from battles, it is almost as if we are getting real news via the poem itself. The "news" in these poems call out their textuality by blurring the boundaries between the real and the fictive, between news texts and crafted, imagined texts (the form of the news lists poems themselves evidences this, where the narrow poem stanzas visually resemble casualty lists on the newspaper page).

The lists in the poems, and the poems themselves, in effect write the soldier into death, textualizing death, as for example in Caroline Mason's poem in the New York Illustrated News, "The Mothers of 1862," 23 May 1863:

And if --- God help me --- if, instead
They flash this word from some red field;
'His brave sweet soul that would not yield
Leaped upward, and they wrote him 'dead.'

Here words and writing are inseparably bound to grief and mourning. The poem, in describing a telegraph message from the field, presumably, presents a picture that makes it seem as if the field itself is flashing words, as if the battlefield were engaged in some awful, bloody sort of text making. The battlefield itself here appears to "wr[j]ite him 'dead.'" The loved soldier is written dead, is written into death, by the bloody battlefield where he has fallen. His death is an eminently read one, one that is entirely textual, where even the most mourned fact, that he is dead, is made textual many times over: it is written, it is italicized, and it is quoted.

In the following stanza from the poem "No Names," from Harper's Weekly, 13 September 1862, we read how:

Down the red record of glory and fame ---
Red with the blood of heroes outpoured ---
The old man seeks for one dear name,
Written on Time with the steel of the sword.

An old man seeks in the red, bloodied record of fame for just "one dear name." This is a very specific reading, a reading that homes in on one cherished word, one name. And the word is written, or carved and inscribed, with a sword. It is a word that is bloodied and
imbrued with war. And again, in the poem "My Hero," from Harper's Weekly, 27 July 1861, we read

Yet many a woman nearer God than I,
With mingled pride and pain
Awaits in seeming calmness news of those
Who may ne'er come again;
***
And many a loving one shall look with dread
Upon the sad list of Columbia's dead,
To see one name --- the dearest and the best,
It may be --- who in battle sunk to rest.

This poem imagines the wartime waiting for news, the suspense, and the anxious reading of the list for only one name. As in so many of these poems, the war is reading for those at home. The war in the world of these poems is a sentimental text to be read and reread, and the poems are filled with the yearning for certain knowledge that reading never entirely satisfies. In the poem "Implora Pace," by Refugitta, from The Southern Illustrated News, 30 May 1863, we read of a woman who sits alone at home, reading and rereading a record (seemingly gotten by heart, a re-cord, or re-heart) whose only real content for her is one name, which burns in the middle of all else:

In her hand she clasps a paper,
And again, and yet again,
Reads with straining eyes the record,
In whose centre burns one name.

'Tis a list of dead and wounded!
His --- God help her! --- mid the first
Dead, and far away! --- her darling!
Ah! her heart is like to burst.

That she reads the list "again, and yet again" says much about the textuality of this war as presented in these poems. The war itself, as pictured in the poems, is a text meant to be read over and over; it is meant to be experienced through reading. Mourning in this poem is reading. It is a very text-based grief, where "she clasps a paper," and where her mourning is enacted as reading "with straining eyes the record." As in this poem, in many popular poems of this period women are imagined as sitting anxiously at home while waiting for word of their son or husband on the battlefield. They are waiting, specifically, for a casualty list, for a name, or word, on a page. They wait to learn the news of the war, and in all these poems news is only one thing: the fate of their loved one.

In these poems, the nation waits (highlighting the suspense of narrative) for words (foregrounding this poem's concern with text and textuality) to help imagine and decipher the war and its wholly new concerns and wounds. These poems make the war a text to be read, where the war becomes personalized and where reading is reduced to looking for one cherished name (as Harper's Weekly's "No Names" puts it, "The old man
seeks for one dear name," and as the *New York Illustrated News*'s poem "A Woman's Waiting" says it, "But I only saw a single name."). The poems imagine a very specialized reading, a reading that is focused on a name, on one person, and a reading that calls attention to the suspense inherent in all reading, where we do not know what will come next in the line of words, where we look for the key fact of what we want to know more about.

This specialized reading was evident in the popular poems, as well as in the popular magazine illustrations of the period. One of the more striking examples of this readerly trope in the magazine illustrations is Winslow Homer's "News from the War," from *Harper's Weekly*, 14 June 1862:

![Image of Homer's "News from the War"](image)

Homer's "News from the War" details many of the same war scenes as much of the popular poetry does, and many of the same poetic images are clustered visually here. "At work in Homer's drawing are the organizing principles of segregation, confrontation, and circulation," writes Diffley. (*Where My Heart Is Turning Ever 1*) She goes on to write,

That sweep encourages circulation, as the eye moves from one vignette to another much as the news passed from one person to another and from one representational form to another during the Civil War. Where wood engravings like Homer's left off, in fact, the war news was illustrated in the popular press by a host of short prose narratives that relied upon similar principles of organization, narratives that were once as readily available as the journals Homer sends flying from the newspaper train and that have since
remained as hidden as the letters in a now forgotten mail pouch for
the fleet. (4)

The illustration pictures the sending and getting of war news, where this news is largely a
read thing. It pictures the war as a series of news accounts, as a circulation of text to be
read.

Most of the vignettes show a scene of reading or writing (with one notable
eception, which I will talk about farther on in this dissertation), picturing the war as
defined in and around text. Here reading the news is what makes for moving war scenes.
The scenes all take place on the battlefront or otherwise outside, except for one domestic
scene, which seems to be the center of the entire series. This section of the illustration,
rather than shading off gradually into another scene next to it, is distinguished by being
partitioned or framed; it is marked as separate, as the one indoor, private scene of
reading. The lone, grieving woman reader is the center of this illustration, the heart of the
war news. She is the image of the mourning reader that so many of the war poems picture
forth. She represents the connections between text, grief, and death that the poems are
about. The entire movement of the illustration seems to swirl around her, guiding us to
see her as at the center of all the war news around her. Her private, solo reading and
sorrow are the end result of all the war news, of all the texts of war, the illustration seems
to say.

As is evident in so many of the popular war poems as well as in Homer's
illustration, the warring nation sought to fill a void, to compensate for a lack of news or
certain knowledge. Readers craved read information, and poems about reading the lists of
the wounded and dead went some way to fill this space of no news. As Faust writes, "In
both the North and South those on the home front struggled to fill the void of official
intelligence." (This Republic of Suffering 104) This reading that is focused on a name, a
reading that is all about suspense and wounding, about creating fiction in the space of no
concrete information, comes to the fore in Homer's illustration.

Alice Fahs explains Homer's illustration, writing,

At the still center of all this activity, the point of repose that drew
and kept the eyes' attention, was a solitary woman seated at her
parlor table, bent in agony over a letter held in her left hand. This
illustration, simply titled "Wounded," told two stories: not only
that she had just received news of the wounding of a beloved, but
that she was now wounded too. The fact that she was surrounded
by the icons of domesticity --- her workbasket on the parlor table, a
birdcage in a corner, an ivy vine --- only underlined the message
that war had invaded Northern homes to create great suffering. In
the South, "Refugitta"s May 1863 "Implora Pace" created an
uncanny poetic echo of Homer's illustration. "She is sitting in the
twilight,/All her work is laid aside," the poem began.

In her hand she clasps a paper,
And again, and yet again,
Reads with straining eyes the record,
In whose centre burns one name.
'Tis a list of dead and wounded!
His --- God help her! --- mid the first
Dead and far away! --- her darling!
Ah! her heart is like to burst. (138)

Homer's illustration not only imagines the war news of the era, it seems to also illustrate the war poetry of the era.

The popular war poems imagine soldiers as (en)listed and then read. The poems make much of this idea of a list, a text to read, decode, and decipher, where death is a cipher, an event to be read in order to be understood. The poem "A Woman's Waiting," from the *New York Illustrated News*, 20 February 1864, imagines this scene:

He was taken and I was left, ---
Left to wait and to watch and to pray, ---
Till there came a message over the wires,
Chilling the air of the August day.

"Killed in a skirmish eight or ten;"
"Wounded and helpless;" as many more, ---
All of them our Connecticut men,
From the little town of Danbury, four.

But I only saw a single name,
Of one who was all the world to me;
I promised to wait for him till I died, ---
O God, O Heaven, when will it be!

A woman is left to wait and watch and pray until a message comes over the wires. The telegraphed message is inserted within quotation marks within the body of the poem itself, further highlighting the role of text and reading in this war poetry. The woman left behind can only wait, anxiously, to read, and what she waits to read is only "a single name." This is a very specific, very specialized reading, which is repeated again and again in poem after poem. Reading the war, making the war read, is what these poems are often about, and this reading is all about waiting for one word, a name.

What is striking about these poems about reading the lists of the wounded and dead is not so much that this scene might have actually occurred (according to Faust, Fahs, and other historians of the war, reading the casualty lists in the newspapers was indeed a common way to locate information about missing loved ones for those left at home during the Civil War), but more how and why this scene gets imagined and reimagined in poem after poem. Part of what comes across in the poems is the notion of measuring that is part of both the imagined lists as well as of verse itself. As Cavitch writes, "...there was in the precision of numbers and official lists the solace of apparent certitude, the conviction that, vast as the losses were, they went only as far as the numbers indicated and no further." (239) These list poems are about reading for one word, and they are also about ways of reckoning, about ways of measuring (to reckon
how many dead, as well as to measure or reckon what that loss means to the
mourners/readers). To measure or reckon is what, Cavitch reminds us, genre serves to do,
as well as what a measured, rhymed poem itself does, with its counted, measured lines.

The reading-the-list poems ask us to contemplate the implications of a list, a
catalog, a text, in terms of ideas of death and mourning. That the dead are referred to as
being listed in the poems forces the mourners in the poems to read them, to consider them
as text, and it allows us, as readers of the poem, to think about how this era thought about
grief as a listed, measured, containable, textual experience. Grief here is bound to and by
text. It is discrete and straightforward, allowing for nothing that cannot be listed or
contained in text. If there is no word for it, it is as if it cannot or did not happen. Though
inadequate for those who grieve, lists and words are all that are left of these dead soldiers.
The lists alluded to in the poems are a kind of counting or accounting, a reckoning (a
counting and an understanding, akin to a scoring, where the understanding is textual, is
written and read) of the dead, an organizing of the dead into names, words, lists, where
reading the dead is mourning them. (This calls to mind a line in Antonio Munoz Molina's
recent novel Sepharad, about listed dead Spanish soldiers: "You would have to read them
one by one, aloud, as if reciting a strict and impossible prayer, to understand that not one
of these names can be reduced to a number in an atrocious statistic." (365))

To count these dead in the poems' lists, to make the dead count, to make them
matter, calls attention to the lists' poignancy in the face of words' inadequacy. And these
lists or countings work on another level in the poems as well, as these poems themselves
are a kind of strict counting, where each word, each syllable in their iambic pentameter
stanzas are counted out with the readers' breath. The poems make much of the fact that all
that is left of these soldiers is a name to be read; all that these men are now is the most
basic, spare text, akin to singly meaningless letters, with no scaffolding, no context, no
story. The poems seem to suggest that those left behind, those who remain, crave more
than a single name on a list. Those who remain to mourn need a story, a fiction --- they
need to read --- to feel consoled. The poems suggest that death and text are intimately
bound together, as those who remain behind are compelled to read these stark lists of
names, and then feel compelled to create stories and to believe these created, consolatory
fictions.

In the poem "Missing," from Harper's New Monthly Magazine, June 1863, we
read the line, "O God! how long is our suspense?" War reading here is suspense. This
poem pictures forth the combination of hope and terror inherent in suspense, and then
makes this suspense all about text, about reading. The poem reminds us that narrative
tension is about withholding information, and it is about the anxiety that this engenders in
readers. The poem suggests that reading itself is inherently suspenseful. And the reading
here is of a list. To list is to want, to want is to wait, to not have yet, to lack, all of which
promotes anxiety. The casualty lists rendered in these poems both give information as
well as create anxiety and dread, as we read in "Missing":

"The postman --- a letter! a letter?" "No, lady, but news of the battle ---
Sad news for my poor wife --- our boy! His name's on the list of the killed.
Our brave fellows fell where they fought, gained nothing, were slaughtered like cattle."
"God help you!" she prayed, as she stood in the Shadow, bewildered and chilled.
"Full list of the wounded and dead." Ah! see how her white fingers falter
In eagerness, dread, and suspense. Poor heart, throbbing wildly with fear;
Blue eyes, that grow dim as they glance at the name of some other one's Walter,
With a full-hearted sigh and a sob, "Thank God, that his name is not here!"

Ay, bless God for that, in the hush of deep sympathy, tender and solemn,
For those whose poor hearts had been broken, o'er words which she hastily read;
Then, fearlessly turning the paper, she sees in the very next column
"The missing, supposed to be left on the field, badly wounded or dead."

Great God! are such shuddering heart-cries the price of a warrior's glory?
"Oh, Walter! my Walter! none other's name, mine only, tender and brave!"
The battle-field flashes before her. Dark Night, hide the vision so gory!
She sees him alone in his anguish --- she far away, helpless to save

***
Young Life, with thy diadem royal, the crown of a love true and tender,
The joy of thy day-dawn has perished, the glory of sunset has passed;
Love's banner is trailing in ashes; like a mirage has vanished its splendor;
For 'Missing' is every where written. The Shadow has fallen at last.

Here we read, "Full list of the wounded and dead. 'Ah! see how her white fingers falter/In eagerness, dread, and suspense." These lines, like countless others in this period, present a novel-like image of a page turner. In drawing out the wait, these poems play with our assumptions about imagination, authorship, and fiction-making itself, as the poems' characters and readers are left, while waiting, to imagine and envision possible alternate scenes. While a mother awaits news of her son in Continental Monthly's "Waiting for News!" 1 September 1863, she is described as "imagining visions."

In these poems, those who wait at home are left with uncertain knowledge, and resort to creating fiction while they wait. They create imagined news in the absence of real news; they make fiction within the made fiction of the poem. In the gap, in the blank space of no news, no knowledge, no word, the characters in these poems make their own story; they fictionalize, and then interpret their own fictions, and all of this is within the fiction of the poem. The war is reinscribed as a harrowing narrative in these periodical poems. The war and its dead are made into fiction, into a suspenseful page turner, and the mothers' and wives' readings of casualty lists is written into a very literary context. In these poems, the women who remain behind (the "remains," in a sense) at home are bound to reading, and their happiness or despair is inextricably bound up in reading and fictionalizing. According to postwar anthologizers of this war verse, the reading of these poems is comforting and satisfying, while I am arguing that the reading in the poems is full of dread and suspense, and is often incomplete and failed.

"Missing" is all about text, from the quoted lines within the poem that mark off lines of text, calling our attention to captured text, to the fact that the story of the poem is all about reading --- reading the mail, reading the news, reading a list. Here the woman is pictured as glancing "at the name of some other one's Walter," reminding us of the fearful close readings that these lists promoted, where men are only a word, and even this one
word is not uniquely their own --- it, and they, can be misread. The poem has the woman reading both cursorily as well as carefully as she seeks just one word, one name. Her eyes race over the text, "o'er words which she hastily read." The reading-the-list poems often make much of this kind of suspenseful, frantic reading, where only one word is sought.

"Missing" also points out how powerful reading and text are. From merely reading one word, one name, the woman extrapolates and creates her own fictive text, her own story: "The battle-field flashes before her. Dark Night, hide the vision so gory! She sees him alone in his anguish --- she far away, helpless to save." Her close reading of a single name leads immediately to a larger, made-up story; her reading of a single text leads to larger fictions, more text.

In this poem, a mourning woman points to the idea of reading as mourning when she sees her loved one's name on a list of the missing and then walks through her town, saying, "For 'Missing' is everywhere written." This line exhibits the very written-ness of being missing or dead in these poems. And the line also offers a compelling scene of repeat readings, where these dead or missing soldiers are mourned, and read, everywhere, again and again. That the poem nears its end with the line "For 'Missing' is everywhere written" says much about the way this war was extremely textualized and imagined as almost entirely read. The loss and fear the woman feels is translated into an entirely written experience. Her loss is written everywhere; it is all she can see, all she can experience, all she can read and know. Her experience of loss is a read one, and it is papered all around her. She is imagined as surrounded by this written word. It is striking that her feelings of loss in the poem are not described in any detail --- we as readers are meant to understand how powerful, even incapacitating, her feelings are just by the fact that the word that generated them is written everywhere, is read from all sides. The mourning woman, and this mourning nation, sees its grief as a text that is everywhere to be read.

This war's reading-the-list poems call attention to their very written-ness, their textuality --- words are temporal, they have an inherent chronology, which these poems foreground. These poems call attention to ideas of narrative and what impels one to move forward while reading. "Waiting so anxious" is how the Continental Monthly poem "Waiting for News!" from 1 September 1863 sums up the way of being that these poems detail. In these reading-the-list poems, the reading wait is drawn out. The reading-the-list poems translate the war into suspenseful reading.

The reading-the-list poems remind us that to list is to want, etymologically, and the grieving readers in these poems both want and yet do not want to read the name, the word, they seek. These poems are part of the larger trope of reading that appears in so many of these war poems, where the concerns of fiction, suspense, narrative, reading, and death are paramount. This private scene of reading, not knowing, and creating consoling fictions is presented as a national trope that defies sectionality in wartime, as these poems appear in both Northern and Southern publications. According to the reading-the-list poems, this intimate scene of text and mourning was generic and told the nation's wartime grief. These reading-the-list poems work to show how this war was presented in the popular poetry as the ultimate sentimental text, where links between reading, mourning, and death can be seen again and again.

This war, in these poems, is the quintessential sentimental text, as defined by theorists of sentimentality like Kete ("If home and family under the conditions of loss are
inarguably two of the fundamental topoi of sentiment, the third is equally important. This third topic is that which holds homes together, holds families together, and holds the self together: that is, bonds." (37)), and Dobson (sentimental writing is comprised of "...tales of abandoned wives, widows, orphaned children, and separated families; deathbed and graveyard scenes; and fantasies of reunions in heaven...evocative metaphors for a looming existential threat --- the potential devastation of deeply experienced human connections." (272)). The Civil War (at least in its middle-class, white version), with its broken homes, lonely wives, orphaned children, separated families, and overall concerns with existential loss and devastation, can be seen as the perfect sentimental story, and these popular war poems take this point and further it by turning the war into text on many levels, both literally and metaphorically. In the reading-the-list poems, war is experienced and constructed as a suspenseful, sentimental text.

Looking ahead to this dissertation's conclusion about anthologies, these lines from "Waiting for News!" are particularly telling: "Now I am waiting to know if he's wounded ---/Waiting to know --- how my fears may be bounded." The women who wait to read in these poems detail their binding fear, the fear that they feel as they wait for the sure knowledge that reading a name on a page purportedly brings, and the postwar anthologizers aim to bind all these poems within a book to offer a last word in textualizing and making known the war's imagined scenes of suspense. This poem goes on to read:

Waiting, O Father! a fond mother waiting,  
Waiting so anxious, the dark tide's abating!  
Waiting all breathless, in agonized anguish,  
Living by heart-throbs that spring up --- then languish;  
Catching each sound that comes back from the battle,  
Dark shrieks and groans and the lonely death rattle,  
Imagining visions of feverish thirsting ---  
Hearts in their utterest loneliness bursting!

***

Now I am waiting to know if he's wounded ---  
Waiting to know --- how my fears must be bounded:  
Closed his eyes may be to sorrow and danger ---  
Dead he may be in the land of the stranger!

***

Pity me, pity me! Send consolation!

The readers in these poems are waiting to hear or read a name, an interpolation. The specificity of a name brings grief home in these poems. The wait for a unique name makes this national grief personal. (What might it mean when this is not happening, when a mother or loved one in the poems is left looking on a list for a name that never appears, when they are let waiting for the seemingly oxymoronic found missing?) In drawing out the anxious wait, these poems play with our assumptions about imagination, authorship,
and fiction making itself, as the poems' characters and readers are left, while waiting, to imagine and envision possible alternate scenes or back stories.

This readerly suspense is about not wanting to learn yet needing to know what happens next, which is what reading is all about, as well as what fears of death are about. The suspense of a page-turner is also the suspense inherent in the narrative of life, where you need to know yet never can know both what happens to your loved ones at the moment of their death, as well as what happens to your loved ones after you yourself are gone. This war's reading-the-list poems point to this conflation between reading and death, both of which are inherently textual in their concerns. Both reading and mourning are all about the "agony of suspense" mentioned in the poem "Waiting for News!" Both reading and mourning --- and, in the reading-the-list poems, it is reading that is mourning --- are characterized by dread and suspense. Readers are quite literally moved by text, and these reading-the-list poems highlight how words and lines impel us forward as we read, as our eyes scan and our hands turn pages. The suspense inherent in reading, and in mourning, is what moves one along. As one poem has it, despite the dread and because of the suspense, despite the fear of not knowing and not wanting to see the cherished name on the list, "Yet the readers read on" (from "News from the War" in War Songs of the Blue and the Gray).

Faust summarizes the readerly, mournful mood of the nation as it waits for news, both in fact as well as in the countless reading-the-list poems, when she quotes a letter writer as writing, "...anxious to know yet dreading to hear." (This Republic of Suffering 113) Reading and writing in these poems, as it must have been during the war itself, were fraught with dread and suspense.

The reading-the-list poems detail a fear of reading, a fear of looking, and they foreground the suspense inherent in any reading, any narrative. According to Faust, life itself was viewed as a narrative, with death as its conclusion. A well-narrated, fully textualized death was seen, in this era of sentimentality, as the proper end to a good life. Without precedent, during the Civil War so many thousands of soldiers died far from home, with no one to hear or write down their last words, their life narrative's conclusion, and many of these reading-the-list poems grapple with the dread, suspense, and anxiety that this lack of knowable, witnessed text generated.

The poems about reading the casualty lists remind us of the way the state keeps track of all these enlisted bodies, bodies it owns. And in the reading-the-list poems, "the remains," those who remain behind at home to wait and read, are enlisted into the war effort, but in an intrinsically textual way: through reading. One of the most widely published poems during the war that textualizes the war is a reading-the-list poem, called, fittingly, "Reading the List," from The Record, 2 July 1863:

"Is there any news of the war?" she said.  
"Only a list of the wounded and dead,"  
Was the man's reply,  
Without lifting his eye  
To the face of the woman standing by.  
"'Tis the very thing I want," she said;  
"Read me a list of the wounded and dead."
He read the list --- 'twas a sad array
Of the wounded and killed in that fatal fray;
In the very midst was a pause to tell
Of a gallant youth who fought so well,
That his comrades asked, "Who is he, pray?"
"The only son of the Widow Gray;"
Was the proud reply
Of his Captain nigh.
What ails the woman standing near?
Her face has the ashen hue of fear!

"Well, well, read on; is he wounded? quick!
Oh, God! but my heart is sorrow sick!"
"Is he wounded? No! he fell, they say,
Killed outright on that fatal day!"
But see, the woman has swooned away!

Sadly she opened her eyes to the light;
Slowly recalled the events of the fight;
Faintly she murmured, "Killed outright!
It has cost me the life of my only son;
But the battle is fought and the victory won;
The will of the Lord, let it be done!"

God pity the cheerless Widow Gray.
And send from the halls of Eternal Day,
The light of His peace to illumine her way!

This poem makes much of the connections between grief and reading. And the act of reading itself is detailed often here. The grieving widow requests that the list be read aloud to her, calling attention to the act of reading, to the fact of a common text read in a community. And in the middle of the reading aloud, we read that "In the very midst there was a pause to tell." This telling pause, this telling silence is a very readerly, very textual metaphor. It calls to mind the way text is constructed, the way news is elaborated upon, made, and authored. And it also points to the inadequacy of words --- reminding us that pauses can often tell more than text can. It highlights the suspense in all reading, and it links this suspense explicitly to reading, to reading aloud. This poem is about the suspense, the wait, the telling pause in reading.

So many of the mourners in these poems are compelled to wait for letters or published casualty lists to obtain certain news of their dead and wounded, again highlighting the very textuality of this war as read in the poems of the war. The widow here says, "'Well, well, read on,'" reminding us as readers of the way suspenseful reading both moves you along the line as well as fills you with dread.

The reading-the-list poems are about news, about the public and private getting of news, and about public and private grief. In these poems, loss and grief are inextricably
bound with reading, with names, and with texts and lines (lines of soldiers, lines of names on a list, lines of people waiting to read the lists at bulletin boards, and lines of poetry). *Harper's Weekly*’s poem "List of the Killed," 28 December 1861, is another of the many poems that are about fearing to read, about the suspense inherent in reading itself:

Mothers who sit in dumb terror and dread,
   Holding that terrible list,
Fearing to look lest you see 'mid the dead
   The name of the boy you have kissed --

Kissed e'en as those who in anguish and pain,
   Kiss precious faces of clay,
E'en as you would had you shuddering lain,
   That dear one in grave-robes away --

I pity you, sitting with faces so white,
   Striving to parry the blow;
I know how that name will torture your sight,
   Can fathom the depth of your woe.

By the pang that has rent my desolate heart,
   By this crushing weight of despair,
I know how you too will shudder and start
   Reading that dear name there.

I know you'll hush that passionate cry,
   Thinking of him as he lies,
With beautiful face upturned to the sky,
   Death veiling the glorious eyes.

"Fighting he fell!" Does a feeling of pride
   Lighten your grief as you think
How brave was the boy that went from your side,
   How he would not falter or shrink?

The mother-love triumphs. Men call women weak.
   Ah, well, perhaps it is so!
I know there are tears e'en now on my cheek
   For the boy that's laying low.

I know that I start at each step on the stair,
   With wistful glance turn to the door,
Thinking, perchance, that my darling is there --
   Peace, heart! he can come nevermore.
But still there's a thought that softens my woe;
Above there's a glorified list,
And one day I'll hear, with rapturous glow,
The name of the boy I have kissed.

The lines "Mothers who sit in dumb terror and dread,/Holding that terrible list" call attention to this imagined war's textuality. The fearful mothers at home sit in dread, all the while holding a list, holding the text that will define and give shape to their war experience. And these reading, grieving mothers are made to conflate dead bodies in battle with names on a list, as they fear to read the list "lest [they] see 'mid the dead/The name of the boy [they] have kissed ---." These mothers are imagined as seeing among the dead, but what they see is not a body, but a name, a text. They are reading the dead, where reading and mourning are once again mingled in compelling ways.

The soldiers in these poems are not dead until they are read. Their deaths are textualized twice over: They are written into the poems, and then within the poems they are not truly dead until someone at home reads their names on a list. The dead are their listed, read names. The dead are simply read, simply text, now. Here the mourning mothers fear to look "'mid the dead," as if the names, the words on a page of text, are battle scenes themselves, strewn with dead bodies. Reading is imagined as seeing, reading is knowing, and seeing "'mid the dead" here is seeing them on a list, it is reading them dead, which can call to mind both reading about them being dead, as well as reading them into being dead, where once again mourning and reading are linked.

In "List of the Killed," reading is an act of war. This popular war poem highlights how reading is a central activity in the war as it was imagined in the popular press. Here, as in many of the reading-the-list poems, texts are another front in the war, in this war of words, in effect. Reading is a battle in its suspense, and words are the bullets (they are often even read in the poems via posted news bulletins, inevitably calling to mind bullets). And in "List of the Killed" we read, "I know how that name will torture your sight," where a read name is just as tortuous a sight as actual war gore, just as hard to see as an actual dead body. Reading here is repellant, it is torture. In this poem's imagery, reading is like a battle: "Striving to parry the blow," "I know how you too will shudder and start,/Reading that dear name there." The readers in this poem, and of this poem, are part of a textual battle. Reading is part of the battle in these war poems, where reading the lists inflicts wounds on those at home who wait. Reading is an act of war in these poems, and read words can inflict wounds.

In the Continental Monthly's poem "In Memoriam," 1 May 1863, we read that "A father's voice fails as he reads the list of the dead,/And a mother's heart is crushed by the terrible blow." Those at home in the reading-the-list poems who wait for word, who wait to read one dreaded word, are often pictured as having been hit by a blow as they read, or as having been hit with a bullet (or a news bulletin) as they read the list. The "remains" in these poems are bound to read, they are bound to reading, and their grief is bound up in and bounded by what they read.

These reading-the-list poems are interesting on a number of levels: they narrativize the wait for news, imbuing it with the kind of suspense that is normally attached to narrative, making the wait textual; they highlight a new way of getting news: reading (many of the poems counterpose old ways of getting news, like bells or town
criers, with this textual, read way); they make reading itself an act of war --- the women who wait for word, who wait to read one dreaded word, are pictured as having been hit with a bullet; and finally, the soldiers in these poems are not dead until they are read --- their deaths are textualized twice over: they are written into the poems, and then within the poems they are not truly dead until someone at home reads their names on a list. The lists in the poems, and the poems themselves, in effect write the soldier into death, textualizing death, as for example in these lines from the poem "The Mothers of 1862," by Caroline A. Mason, *New York Illustrated News*, 23 May 1863:

And if --- God help me --- if, instead
   They flash this word from some red field:
      "His brave, sweet soul that would not yield;
Leaped upward, and they wrote him 'dead'"

Here the dead soldier becomes news that is flashed from a field by a telegraph wire. The news of his death is imagined, and it is cordoned off in quotation marks, marking it as text. And his death is further textualized by the fact that it is written as a poem, and then within the poem it is called out as written: "and they wrote him "dead."" This soldier's death is only textual, only written, and the grief felt about it is only read.

Reading the list is a central part of the war, according to these war poems. Reading the list and looking for one name is the most important part of the war effort for those at home, as well, seemingly, for those reading these poems about reading the list. The poem "Ode for Decoration-Day," by Henry Peterson, in *Bugle-Echoes: A Collection of Poems of the Civil War, Northern and Southern*, describes it this way:

We mourn for all, but each doth think of one
   More precious to the heart than aught beside ---
Some father, brother, husband, or some son
   Who came not back, or coming, sank and died:
In him the whole sad list is glorified!

Here more expected wartime forms of patriotism and sectional unity are jettisoned in favor of atomism, where, though they "mourn for all," these mourners in fact only "think of one." Just as they read in a way that seeks just one word, these mourners think of the many dead and wounded in terms of just one. This, again, points to the very specific nature of the reading in this war, as imagined in the popular poetry. Yet, these poems are generic, in that there are hundreds of poems with nearly identical tropes and images. Though each poem claims to be about just one name, just one individual's grief and private reading, indeed, the sentimental bond between just two individuals, in truth all these similar, even generic, poems are bound together, creating a unified sentimental text of the war, where the separate parts, the individual griefs, are bound together in one reading whole, one overarching, generic "text" of war.

These poems of imagined individual grief that bind a national grief as one point to the paradox of the one versus the many of sentimentality itself, where individual grief and mourning is meant to stand in for a generic, repeatable grief and mourning of the nation. The many versus one paradox of sentimentality is also the paradox of death, a fact
that is alluded to by Faust when she examines how this warring nation puzzles out "...how to grasp both the significance of a single death and the meaning of hundreds of thousands." (This Republic of Suffering 261) She goes on to write of this problem of the one and the many that is part of both sentimentality and of death: "This problem of the one and the many challenged Northerners and Southerners alike and served as a central theme in the war's popular culture. How could the meaning of so many deaths be understood? And conversely, how could an individual's death continue to matter amid the loss of so many?" (262)

This paradox of sentimentality --- the whole versus the parts, the single bond in relation to the boundless whole --- is tied to reading, lists, news, and knowledge. Cavitch, citing a New York Times review from 20 October 1862 of a series of Civil War photos by Mathew Brady, writes of "[t]hese men who no longer exist, except as 'a confused mass of names,' as a 'jumble of type' in the morning newspaper, and as...'weird copies of carnage.'" (241) The reading-the-list poems point to this paradox, where each dead man is made into copy, he is copied out and translated into text. The dead are written into, become, words, text, type. Cavitch goes on to draw a connection between genre and grief, where the singularity of each death, or every grief, is also part of the sameness of death, the repeatability of grief. That is, though each individual death is unique and only happens once, it is also the same each time in essential ways. Death is repeatable since we all experience it, yet at the same time utterly unknowable, just as, generically, these reading-the-list poems represent the same scene time and again, yet each man mourned in each poem is imagined as unique.

Faust points to this problem of language, of genre, of mourning, and of knowing for sure when she writes of sentimentality, irony, and Civil War literature:

"We say 'but one,' never thinking that that one was somebody's all perhaps. Had a million been slain, it would have been 'only one' in a million homes." Like the effort to identify the dead, poems, songs, and stories --- with titles like "One of Many," "Only a Private Killed," "Only One Killed," or just "Only" --- sought to preserve the meaning of the individual amid the multitude....The distance, the discrepancy between the one and the many juxtaposed and reinforced two modes of understanding that emerged from the Civil War experience. Sentimentality and irony grew side by side in Americans' war-born consciousness. The sentimental drew its strength from the need to resist the unintelligibility of mass death by focusing on the singularity of each casualty, the tragedy of each loss. Sentimentality served as a weapon against the force of numbers, against the statistical homogenization and erasure of individuals. Irony, by contrast, emerged from acknowledgement of this fundamental tension, the admission of the almost unspeakable possibility that the individual might not, in this juggernaut of modern mass warfare, actually matter. "All Quiet Along the Potomac" managed, like Civil War America more generally, to be at once sentimental and ironic in its
treatment of the dead soldier who was simultaneously all and "nothing." (This Republic of Suffering 264)

These popular war poems imagine a real, terrible scene of grief in each poem, yet their steady focus on text and reading remind us that this war grief is indeed read, and therefore fashioned and repeatable, just as genre and ideas about death are.

In these poems about waiting for one word, waiting to grieve over one death, loss is imagined as a loss of words. According to these poems, one's words and story are evidence that one is alive, and when there is no word, there is no evidence that a loved soldier still lives, as we are reminded of in the poem "Left on the Battle-Field," by Howard Glyndon, in Harper's Weekly, 29 August 1863:

Oh, my darling! my darling! never to feel
   Your hand going over my hair!
Never to lie in your arms again, ---
   Never to know where you are!
Oh, the weary miles that stretch between
   My feet and the battle-ground,
Where all that is left of my dearest love
   Lies under some yellow mound!

It is but little I might have done
   To lighten your parting pain;
But 't is bitter to think that you died alone,
   Out in the dark and rain!
Oh, my hero love! --- to have kissed the pain
   And the mist from your fading eyes!
To have saved one only passionate look
   To sweeten these memories!

And thinking of all, I am strangely stunned,
   And cannot believe you dead.
You loved me, dear! And I loved you, dear!
   And your letter lies there unread!
You are not dead! You are not dead!
   God never could will it so ---
To craze my brain and break my heart ---
   And shatter my life --- I know!

Dead! dead! and never a word,
   Never a look for me!
Dead! dead! and our marriage-day
   Never on earth to be!
I am left alone, and the world is changed,
   So dress me in bridal white,
And lay me away in some quiet place
Out of the hateful light.

When the narrator here cries out, "Dead! dead! and never a word," we are reminded once again that in this poetry loss is envisioned as a loss of words, a loss of text. Words, text, are held out as evidence, as sure knowledge, and when the letters, the soldier's texts, fail to arrive, would-be readers at home are left with only one interpretation. Loss of text in these poems is the sign of the loss of life.

"Left on the Battle-Field" is the extended lament of a sweetheart left at home, and she grieves that "thinking of all, I am strangely stunned./And cannot believe you dead," and, "And your letter lies there unread!/You are not dead! You are not dead!" and finally, "Dead! dead! and never a word." Here the dead soldier is, in effect, his letter, to those left at home. He is a text, a letter, in the sense of a unique, singly meaningless phoneme, as well as a letter in the sense of a rich, crafted text of personal narratives that collapse time and space and enact the sentimental bonds that connect people who are apart. According to these lines, the beloved soldier is not dead until he is written and read. His mourning sweetheart cannot believe him dead, cannot believe the word she has received that announces him to be dead, because his letter still lies there unread --- he is unread, and because he never conveyed to her his last words himself, he is dead. These lines exhibit this poetry's complex relation of text to mourning, of text, story, fiction, and fiction's consolations to death and mourning. As this poem indicates, for this poetry, war and text are deeply intertwined, indeed, war death is text in compelling ways.

Reading is mourning in "The News of a Day," by Sarah T. Bolton, from Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War, where a woman reads a casualty list: "She read the names of the missing and slain;/But one she read over and over again":

"Great battle! Great battle!" the news-boy cried,
But it scarcely rippled the living tide
That ebbed and flowed in the noisy street,
With its throbbing heart and busy feet,
Again through the hum of the city thrilled,
"Great battle! Great battle! Ten thousand killed!"
And the little carrier hurried away
With the sorrowful news of that summer day.

To a dreary room in an attic high
Trembled the words of that small, sharp cry;
And a lonely widow bowed her head,
And murmured, "Willie, my Willie, is dead.
O I feared it was not an idle dream
That led me last night to that dark, deep stream,
Where the ground was wet with a crimson rain,
And strewn all over with ghastly slain.

***
She read the names of the missing and slain;
But one she read over and over again;
And the sad, low words that her white lips said,
Were 'Company C, William Warren dead.'
The world toiled on through the busy street,
With its aching heart and unresisting feet;
The night came down to her cold hearth-stone,
And still the words that her white lips said,
Were, 'Company C, William Warren dead.'
The light of the morning chased the gloom
From the emberless hearth of that attic room,
And the city's pulse throbbed again,
But the mother's heart had forgotten its pain.

She had gone through the gates to the better land,
With that terrible list in her pale, cold hand,
With her white lips parted, as at last she said,
'Company C, William Warren dead.'

This poem is about the news of war, the words or text of this war, and mourning here is entirely textual, where one can read a (dead) name again and again: "She read the names of the missing and slain;/But one she read over and over again." The poem imagines trying to read the dead, an attempt to make sense of, make legible, the dead. And the name read is a dead name, a dead person's name. Here the mourning mother dies herself, with the news/text of her son's war death still in hand: "She had gone through the gates to the better land,/With that terrible list in her pale, cold hand." The text that brings news of a loved one's death comes to represent all that that death means. The list both brings terrible news and yet is what remains behind of the dead soldier; it is the text of him, his name, that his mourning mother keeps with her. The mourning, reading mother in the poem learns of her loved one's death through dead letters on a page, rather than from a voice, or a church bell, or another more "live," more intangible, less easily repeatable way. (Some of these poems, such as "Melt the Bells" in War Poetry of the South and "What the Village Bell Said" in Songs and Ballads, make explicit reference to old versus new ways of getting the news of a death.) The reading-the-list poems make the point that if you read to mourn, you can read and reread over and over again, as opposed to hearing a church bell or a town crier. A name on a list, a name on a page, can be reread, remourned, revived (re-called to life) (a point that will be expanded in this dissertation's conclusion, in terms of the function of war poetry anthologies).

The reading-the-list poems are bound up in suspense, in wanting to know, and the poems of impossibly present narratives, where we as readers know more than the characters whose lives in the poems are affected, are all about knowing and wanting to know. Needing to know, reading, and mourning are bound together in telling ways in many of these poems. The issue of needing to know sure knowledge, reading, and mourning is touched on by Faust when she writes of the Civil War that,

In its assault upon chattel slavery, the conflict fundamentally redefined the relationship between the individual and the nation.
This affirmation of the right to selfhood and identity reflected beliefs about human worth that bore other implications, for the dead as well as the living. Central to the changes that have occurred since the 1860s is the acknowledgment of the importance of information: of knowing whether a soldier is dead or alive, of being able to furnish news or provide the bereaved with the consoling certainty represented by an actual body. (103)

Fahs also offers examples of the suspenseful wait for news to read that defines much of the home experience of this war, both in fact and in the poems:

At the same time, however, authors argued that women's agonized waiting was a form of wartime valor. "They used to tell us," "Refugitta" (Constance Cary) wrote in the August 1863 Southern Illustrated News, "that what required most courage was to walk into a battle-field, and die amid its thunders. We waiting women at home can tell a different tale," she concluded. (134)

The need for sure knowledge, for confirmed, textual, read news is what many of these poems are about, and it is also this suspenseful need for news that Faust explicates when she writes of "...the anguish of wives, parents, siblings, and children who found undocumented, unconfirmed, and unrecognized loss intolerable." (This Republic of Suffering 135) Faust goes on to detail this suspenseful need to know that defines this war, both in fact and in its poetry. She writes of a father searching for news of his soldier son: "He began a series of frantic inquiries, seeking to end the 'painful suspense' with information...." (133)

The suspense in these poems is about making sense of what comes next as well as about not wanting to read what comes next. As Faust writes in her analysis of Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd," "'Lilacs' embraces, in Vendler's words, 'the value of acceptance, rather than denial, of the full stop of death.' Yet for those who remain alive to mourn, death provides no full stop." (This Republic of Suffering 160) It is telling that Faust uses a very textual, poetic metaphor ("full stop") to imagine ways of rendering death. The dead are dead, there is no revising that full stop. Yet those who live on feel compelled to create meaning from the full stop of death, they offer text and narrative and story to make sense of this full stop. Death itself, in these poems, becomes interchangeable with text, with words, fiction, and form. The suspense of what comes next, when read in light of poems on war deaths, is about either embracing or denying the finality of text, and the popular war poems suggest this denial and acceptance through their complex maneuvers with narrative time and text. Of course, suspense in narrative in general is about what comes next. The reading-the-list poems during this war point us as well to the suspense in the larger question the country faced after the war about what comes next. In this way, the textual question of suspense becomes a political question, and Henry L. Williams attempts to address it in his war poem anthology, War Songs of the Blue and the Gray. According to Williams's preface, the very poems that were about the dread and draw of reading during the war are repackaged and rebound postwar to help the two sides of the nation reread and answer new questions about what comes next,
questions about how this war and its end will turn out (in this dissertation’s conclusion I will look more carefully at Williams's project, where war poems are part of an effort to textually package and shape the meaning of the war, to shape the interpretations of the outcome of the war through images of suspenseful reading).

The readers of lists in these poems want to read to know, and, in the impossible present poems, we as readers of the poems get the comfort of reading to know; and, as per Williams, contemporary readers of the anthologies have the comfort of knowing, of reading and rereading. The characters in the impossible present poems are left in suspense, where we as readers of the poems get the comfort of sure knowledge. The reading-the-list poems as well as the impossible present poems traffic in reading, rumor, and hearsay. The one thing readers in these poems seek is sure knowledge, which makes it all the more interesting that these poems let their readers know more, and with more certainty, than readers within the poems are granted. The poems promote the value of reading and text (as opposed to first-hand evidence) in terms of knowing.

In many of these poems, mourners must rely on a text and reading, or on others' accounts and countings, to know if their loved one is dead or not. For example, in Harper's Weekly's poem "The Broken Sword," 5 December 1863, a woman at home is imagined as waiting for a sure sign that her faraway soldier lover is dead. He promised that if he died, he would arrange to have his sword sent back to her, broken, as the only sure evidence of his death that she should believe. The poem imagines various scenes where she reads false accounts, overhears rumors, and receives other misleading signs and texts. She spends most of the poem looking for the sure sign, sure evidence, of death that she was promised. The poem, like others in this era, is about ways of knowing and not knowing, rumors, tokens, and tales. It is about the fictions that always necessarily surround accounts of death, which are all the more pronounced during this war, where so many men died so far from home, so far from loving witnesses, and hence the ways of getting the news of death from afar took on complex meanings.

According to the war poems, mourners must rely on written accounts to know what happened to their loved ones, to know how they died and what they were thinking as they died. At the same time, the poems point up the very impossibility of knowing these things. These poems and their concern with text make clear that death is, inevitably, a mystery that "the slain/Sole solvers are." (Melville, "The Armies of the Wilderness," from Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War) The poems present a picture of a lack of sure knowledge, and the creation of fiction (both in the poems, and as the poems) as what fills in for this lack of information. Despite this era's widespread Christian faith and sentimental beliefs about human bonds reaching into an afterlife, these poems in essence question the very foundations of the Christian and sentimental concern with sure knowledge and words' fixed meanings.

Many of the poems are about the missing or unknown dead soldier. According to these poems, the worst fate for those at home is not knowing, not reading, the fate of one's loved soldier. Many of the poems detail the rumors and hearsay that surround the missing soldier, and in these poems the idea of fiction making is in contest with the more reliable news contained in letters and lists. These poems imagine a war where we as readers are compelled to contemplate all the reading material that goes into making the narrative of these soldiers' lives, of this nation's war. As Fahs notes, often in these texts women at home are imagined as those who "live on fragments of newspapers." (135;
The mourners in these poems live on text; they experience the horrors and sorrows of war purely through text. The reading-the-list poems call attention to their very written-ness. The reading-the-list poems are about how this war was read, how the war was imagined as a textual experience for those who remained at home. These poems foreground suspense and narrative, they force their readers to draw connections and conclusions between ideas of suspense, news, reading, and mourning.

The reading-the-list poems and their concern with suspense bring to mind the suspense inherent in mourning and death. The suspense in mourning and death --- not wanting to leave the world or one's loved ones without knowing how it will all turn out, without knowing how one's loved ones died --- calls to mind the suspense present in reading itself: the suspense about needing to know more. The suspense that death invokes is akin to the suspense in wanting to turn the page, and the impossibility of continuing forever to do this, the mourning of this, that both reading and death elicit. The reading-the-list poems, in their attention to ideas of getting news and reading the dead, call our attention to the assumptions about the assurance, consolation, and indeed sure knowledge that reading represents to these mourners, as can be seen in these lines from "Only a Few," in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War:

How often we read in the news of the day
Accounts of a fight, or a skirmish, at most,
Where a few of our soldiers held thousands at bay,
Or scattered like chaff a whole rebel host.

And as onward we read the paragraph through,
Our hearts with deep fear and anxiety filled,
Though hotly contested an hour or two,
We find there were only a few soldiers killed.

Yes, "only a few" --- yet how little we think
Of the desolate homes, bereft of their light ---
Of the hearts that in sorrow and in misery sink,
Being robbed of their hope, their pride and delight.

***
But, oh! who can console those poor mothers now,
Those sisters, those wives, or those children so dear?

We read: "And as onward we read the paragraph through," a line that marks the movement of reading itself, another instance where these poems display their concern with textuality. The suspenseful dread of mourning is embedded in the movement of reading a linear line itself. Mourning, death, and reading all force us to wonder: What comes next? Text and reading are paramount in the experience of war mourning and war death, according to these poems. These lines also exhibit how reading causes "hearts with fear and anxiety [to be] filled," where fear and anxiety are tightly bound up in reading, in text. The poem asks, "But, oh! who can console those poor mothers now./Those sisters,
those wives, or those children so dear?," and the implication seems to be that the reading being done in the poem is certainly not consoling.

The movement of reading across a page and wanting to know more, as well as the ultimate lack of consolation in this, can be seen as well in the poem "News from the War," from *War Songs of the Blue and the Gray*:

Two women sat at a farm-house door,
    Busily reading the news,
While softly around them fair twilight sheds
    Her tender shadows and dews.

Peace smiles in the tenderest heaven above;
    Peace rests on the landscape fair;
And peace, like a holy spirit of love,
    Broods in the balmy air.

But not one ray of peace illumes
    Those sad and wistful eyes,
Which search that printed record o'er
    As mariners search the skies.

Look on their faces: one like a rose
    Fresh with the beauty of May;
The other, pale as a waning moon
    Seen through thin clouds of gray.

Yet, though one is young and the other old,
    With the same soft glory they shine;
For they're tinted with tenderest light and shades
    By love, the artist divine.

Now fast as a radiant vision, fades
    The glow of the western skies;
Yet the readers read on, unmindful of all
    Save the paper before their eyes.

Nothing to them the charms of that hour, ---
    The magic of meadow and hill;
For spirits bowed down with a weight of care,
    Are blind to the beautiful still.

Deeper the shadows of twilight fall;
    More hushed grows the dewy air,
When suddenly breaks on that holy calm
    A quick, wild cry of despair.
The younger glances have found it first, ---
That record so sad and so brief;
"Mortally wounded!" --- two dread words ---
Winged arrows of pain and grief.

"Mortally wounded!" --- look again;
Alas! it is all too true;
Not the brave alone, but the fond and fair
Are mortally wounded, too.

He on the battle-field far away;
They, in their quiet home, ---
The wife and the mother, who never more
Shall see their loved hero come.

The grass will grow where the warrior fell,
And sweet wild flowers may bloom
On the very turf once blackened and burned
By the fearful fires of doom.

But the smiling summers, that come and go,
Can never, never heal
The bleeding bosoms which felt to-day
Something sharper than steel.

"Mortally wounded!" oh, dread War!
Many a victim is thine,
Save those who hear your terrible voice
Go thundering along the line!

If we give proud names and echoing hymns,
And build up monuments grand
To the gallant spirits who suffer and fall
In defense of their native land;

Let us yield a tenderer tribute still, ---
Sad tears and a pitying sigh, ---
To the uncrowned martyrs who silently sink,
And die when their heroes die.

Here we read how "Two women sat at a farm-house door./Busily reading the news." This scene shows how very embedded reading was in this war's imagined version of itself. Even on the farm, where one would expect to find families laboring or performing more bucolic tasks, we find a mother and daughter reading the news, which strikes us as not a typically depicted farm activity. This war, as imagined in verse, is saturated with images of news and reading. Yet the reading in this poem brings no consolation, no peace: "But
not one ray of peace illumes/Those sad and wistful eyes,/Which search that printed record o'er/As mariners search the skies." The close reading described here brings no peace, despite the fact that in the previous stanza peace had smiled, rested, and brooded lovingly over all. Reading is the one thing in the poem that disturbs the peace, that ushers anxiety and dread into an otherwise calm scene.

The line "Yet the readers read on, unmindful of all/Save the paper before their eyes," calls attention to the anxiety and suspense of this reading, and it reminds us as well of the concomitant literal movement of reading itself, where readers are impelled along a line, word by word, held in suspense until they reach the end. Here the anxious readers read on, looking at nothing but the paper before their eyes. All that matters here is text, is reading the news. Indeed, the war activity most often imagined in the countless popular war poems is reading. Reading, according to these poems (these read things), was the central war activity.

The following stanzas detail a painful, and painfully repeated, reading:

The younger glances have found it first, ---
That record so sad and so brief;
"Mortally wounded!" --- two dread words ---
Winged arrows of pain and grief.

"Mortally wounded!" --- look again;
Alas! it is all too true;
Not the brave alone, but the fond and fair
Are mortally wounded, too.

Here reading is foregrounded by having the words read quoted in the poem itself. We can see, even typographically, that this imagined war experience is primarily about words, about text. And "Not the brave alone, but the fond and fair/Are mortally wounded, too." That is, reading these words has in effect mortally wounded these mourning readers just as much as the brave soldier was mortally wounded on the field. We read "two dread words ---/Winged arrows of pain and grief," where these read and dreaded words, as if arrows, enter and wound the women's bodies. The mourning women here incorporate the two dread words they read. Here reading brings no consolation; rather, it inflicts mortal wounds, and "The bleeding bosoms which felt to-day/Something sharper than steel" feel this unparalleled war pain because of what they read. This scene of reading is more vividly depicted than most of the rare battle scenes are in these popular war poems. Here reading and the injury and grief of war are mutually constitutive.

The reading in this poem is painfully brief, a "record so sad and so brief." Just two words are read, "mortally wounded," yet they contain whole lives of grief. And these two brief, dread words are read and then read again: "Mortally wounded!" --- look again." In contrast to the repeated sentiment "look away" in the popular Civil War song "Dixie," these lines exhibit a keen desire to read, and to look and read again. As opposed to the genteel looking away from battle scenes and from the real costs of war that many have charged sentimental poetry with perpetuating, this poem, and many others like it, know that the desire to read and reread, to look and look again, are at the heart of the war as imagined in its poetry. (Rereading takes on even more importance in the postwar efforts
of the war-poem anthologizers, particularly in Henry L. Williams's *War Songs of the Blue and the Gray.*) These poems unsentimentally force their readers to confront the "weird copies of carnage" of war, at least in terms of text. These poems insist on a reading and a rereading; they insist that we not turn away from war's words, that we not crowd out (calling to mind Melville's poem "Donelson," which I will talk about more fully farther on in this dissertation) the images or alternate and repeat readings of this war.

"Yet the readers read on" line from "News from the War" showcases the idea of narrative that is central to so many of these poems. That which compels and impels one to move forward along a line of text, no matter the terrible news that may be at the end of the line, is at the very heart of these poems. These poems force us to consider the relation of narrative suspense, reading, and death and mourning to this era's war and to the idea of the sentimental soldier. The poems prompt us to consider what it is about text and reading that is important to this era and this era's conception of war death, both on the battlefield as well as in the offstage scenes in this poetry --- the home scenes of war reading that make for the split-screen effect in many of these poems.

The poem "Letters from Home" from *Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War* punctuates yet again the way text and reading are so intimately bound up with this war effort. We read "O, write to them often!", and "A letter from home hath a magic spell," reminding us how central reading is to this war's conception of itself. The entire poem reads as follows:

The day is passed with its march or drill,
   And the soldiers, tired of their lot in life,
Have gathered together, rare castles to build
   Of the times, when peace shall finish the strife;
Their sunburnt and bearded faces glow
   Hard and unmoved by the camp-fires bright;
They seem to be proof against hardships and woe,
   And their hearts to be callous to love and light.

But, hark! they hear some familiar sound,
   And quickly they hush the loud laugh and jest;
And yonder group drop their cards to the gorund.
   The mail has come! and quick to his feet
The strong man springs like an eager child;
   Is there naught for me? yes, here it is; sweet
   And cheering almost, as an old friend's smile.
But his smiles soon turn to groans, alas!
   As he reads that his loved one is ending her life,
And vainly calling for him to the last,
   And he murmurs, "O God! help the soldier's wife."
Near by stands one, reading, his face all aglow,
   Loving words from his own brave, true little wife;
There a boy, scarce twenty, whose unbidden tears flow,
At his mother's warm prayers, for his welfare and life.

Here one reads that another is wooing his lady,
   And he clenches his fists with ferocious scowls;
Pat there, has his sheet, telling how little Teddy
   And the other pigs grow, bless their dear little souls.
But there stands one with an anxious face,
   Is there none for me? almost breathless he speaks,
No, that was the last; and he turns away,
   Ashamed of the tears on his sunburnt cheeks.

Would you deem a man less noble and brave,
   That the tears could stand upon his cheek?
The One who descended our souls to save,
   Did not disdain for sinners to weep.
The soldiers afar from their homes and their friends,
   Our prayers and our sympathies daily need.
O, do what you can to make them amends,
   For the life which, for our country, they lead.

O, write to them often! our brave soldier boys!
   Wives, mothers, and sisters, and sweethearts dear!
Write cheering and hopeful, of love, and the joys
   That await them again when peace shall reign here.
A letter from home hath a magic spell,
   To make them forget, for a time, all care,
In the thought that loved ones at home wish them well,
   And remember them often in thought and in prayer.

This poem catalogs war reading, detailing all the many soldier readers, and it itself is war reading, being a poem written and read during the war. As this poem, and many others, would have it, a central component of the war effort is to read and write, is textual. This poem portrays the text of war, and the reading of war. As Faust notes, text, particularly poems and condolence letters, are what (sentimentally) bind together home and battlefront. (This Republic of Suffering 15) Text is seen as the sentimental bond that connects separated loved ones, and in the poetry this image of the links that text provides is elaborated upon even further. According to these war poems, reading and writing poems (which are largely about reading and writing lists and letters) is a key part of the national war effort, on both sides of the warring nation. Indeed, the poems (and later, many of the anthologies) often imagine a coming together in writing, in reading, in text.

A letter (these poems are very taken with images and implications of text and of letters, both in terms of epistles as well as in terms of phonemes) to or from the dead is a trope found often in these poems. These "dead letters" defy the boundary and bonds of time and being; these letters represent a crossing of borders and boundaries via the bonds of affection that the poems and letters --- war's texts --- instantiate. We read in Harper's Weekly's "At Fredericksburg," by L. C. M., 7 February 1863, "There is no one to write...."
Mourning a loved one becomes mourning the loss of someone to write to --- mourning is a textual loss. As this poem demonstrates, for this period, emotional, affective loss is gauged or reckoned by its potential textuality. We can see this in the entire text of the poem "At Fredericksburg":

It was just before the last fierce charge,
When two soldiers drew their rein,
For a parting word and a touch of hands ---
They might never meet again.

One had blue eyes and clustering curls ---
Nineteen but a month ago ---
Down on his chin, red on his cheek:
He was only a boy, you know.

The other was dark, and stern, and proud;
If his faith in the world was dim,
He only trusted the more in those
Who were all the world to him.

They had ridden together in many a raid,
They had marched for many a mile,
And ever till now they had met the foe
With a calm and hopeful smile.

But now they looked in each other's eyes
With an awful ghastly gloom,
And the tall dark man was the first to speak:
"Charlie, my hour has come.

"We shall ride together up the hill,
And you will ride back alone;
Promise a little trouble to take
For me when I am gone.

"You will find a face upon my breast ---
I shall wear it into the fight ---
With soft blue eyes, and sunny curls,
And a smile like morning light.

"Like morning light was her love to me;
It gladdened a lonely life,
And little I cared for the frowns of fate
When she promised to be my wife.

"Write to her, Charlie, when I am gone,
And send back the fair, fond face;
Tell her tenderly how I died,
And where is my resting-place.

"Tell her my soul will wait for hers,
In the border-land between
The earth and heaven, until she comes:
It will not be long, I ween."

Tears dimmed the blue eyes of the boy ---
His voice was low with pain:
"I will do your bidding, comrade mine,
If I ride back again.

"But if you come back, and I am dead,
You must do as much for me:
My mother at home must hear the news ---
Oh, write to her tenderly.

"One after another those she loved
She has buried, husband and son;
I was the last. When my country called,
She kissed me and sent me on.

"She has prayed at home, like a waiting saint,
With her fond face white with woe:
Her heart will be broken when I am gone:
I shall see her soon, I know."

Just then the order came to charge ---
For an instant hand touched hand,
Eye answered eye; then on they rushed,
That brave, devoted band.

Straight they went toward the crest of the hill,
And the rebels with shot and shell
Plowed rifts of death through their toiling ranks,
And jeered them as they fell.

They turned with a horrible dying yell
From the heights they could not gain,
And the few whom death and doom had spared
Went slowly back again.

But among the dead whom they left behind
Was the boy with his curling hair,
And the stern dark man who marched by his side
Lay dead beside him there.

There is no one to write to the blue-eyed girl
The words that her lover said;
And the mother who waits for her boy at home
Will but hear that he is dead,

And never can know the last fond thought
That sought to soften her pain,
Until she crosses the River of Death,
And stands by his side again.

The line "'Write to her, Charlie, when I am gone'" suggests a parallel in the poem between loss and writing, between death and text. Here loss is measured in and by text, where writing is offered as a supplement to or replacement for the dead soldier. This poem imagines two soldiers envisioning their own deaths and then planning for the news of their deaths to be written and sent home. This loss, this death, would then be in another's hand, the news of it would be secondhand in the most literal sense. This image of another's hand brings to mind the idea of the palimpsest, or a writing over, a writing out. The dead soldiers in the poem would be written dead: They would be written of as dead, and they would in essence become secondhand writing (both in the ghostwritten letters home, as well as in the poem itself). Death and text inform each other in this poem, and the poem imagines that the most essential thing for a dead soldier to be is written and read.

Writing and reading are central war activities in this poem, and this line from "At Fredericksburg" makes this compellingly clear: "There is no one to write to the blue-eyed girl." The poem laments the fact that there is no one to write the news of the soldier's death. His death is an unauthored moment. The text of his death is absent --- there is no one to write it or read it, which, according to the poem, is more tragic than the fact that he died. Yet this unauthored moment is embedded in a poem, a very textual thing, and this fictive moment will be read again and again, each time the poem is read. A text, the poem, laments that this imagined soldier's death remains beyond text, is unauthored and unread, all of which serves to underscore ideas of textuality that appear throughout this war poetry.

Changes in the postal service during this period, and the advent of the Associated Press, add another wrinkle to this war's concern with textuality and its persistent tropes of reading. As Faust writes, "Newspaper columns substituted for the personal letter that was unlikely to make its way through military lines." (This Republic of Suffering 127) Grief was told textually on many levels in this era. Historically, it was a newly read thing, both in the rare letters that made their way home, and in the more common form of the newspaper casualty list. But both of these ways of getting the news of a death were already very textual, and very new for this era as compared to more traditional, personal ways of experiencing and sharing grief. Another layer atop the historical during this period was the highly text-based ways of grieving that were imaginative, that were inscribed in the war poetry. Many of these war poems evidence this with their concern
with getting news, waiting, lingering, and suspense, where getting news is personalized into "getting word," as we read in "A Battle Dirge," by Ralph Hoyt, from Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War:

Oh! wife, linger not the postman to hear ---
He comes, but his news hath the mark of the bier.

This poem reminds us of the links this war poetry makes between the post and news to suspense and death. Both the post and the Associated Press as well as narrative concerns with suspense, and the analogous concern with suspense that narrative shares with mourning and death, are about the collapsing or foreshortening of time and space. These poems mark new ways of thinking of mourning and sentimental bonds through the new senses of travelling through time and space of news on a wire (which is a line, a border, a boundary, as well as a binding mechanism). Ways of getting and reading war news, as well as ways of imagining faraway war deaths from home, become new ways of reckoning and measuring grief in this poetry. As the bonds of sentimentality are severed by faraway and unknowable, unwitnessed war deaths, and as the accustomed boundaries of time and space are foreshortened by new ways of communicating through the related innovations of the post, the telegraph, and the Associated Press, mourners' minds, at least as imagined in the war poems, are filled with anxiety and expectation. The collapse of time and space in the news and via the post, at least as imagined in the poems about letters and lists, creates more anxiety, more suspense and more (read) dread (all of which is akin to how reading operates in general --- compelling us to move along a line, not knowing what will come next, keeping us in suspense by its very form: a line of words).

The dread in reading as well as the dread and anxiety that the new forms this reading came in get conflated in these war poems. For instance, in the poem "Woman ---1862," by Harriet M'Ewen Kimball, in the Anti-Slavery Standard, from the Independent, we read the lines

She shudders while the words of fate along the wires are chasing,
Or trembling waits the hurried line some comrade may be tracing;

In these lines we see the fear of, and therefore importance of, words during this war, according to its poetry. These lines exhibit the way that text and reading inform people's experiences of war in the poems. Mourning, anxiety, suspense, and text are mingled with the sense of the diminishment of time and space that the telegraph evokes in this period. Traces of text, as well as wires that carry and bind meaning, are sources of fear for mourners and readers here. We see a similar sentiment in the poem "Giving the Mitten," in Harper's Weekly, 25 January 1862, where we read of how a mourning woman

Listened, pressing her bodice tight over her heart,
When the wire thrilled the grim battle story

The wires of a mourning woman's bodice and newswires are conflated, each encircling the waiting, anxious, and thrilled, on edge, suspended (between knowing and not knowing, by a wire, by the thought of reading a name) woman. Though listening and not
reading, this image is still suggestive of the extreme textuality of mourning in this poetry. This woman is bound by wires, both within her apparel as well as by the news that is bound to thrill and horrify her. These wires, or bonds, bounds, serve to regulate her body as well as her grief. They hem her in, both constricting her heart as well as restraining her reaction to the mournful story that they themselves communicate. The images here are very readerly, making the woman out to be the heroine of a sentimental tale of tears, where she is bound by her bodice as well as by her fear, and where the newswires bind her to a thrilling battle story. Here war news is thrilling fiction that is entirely taken in by the body, is read and heard with the heart. The telegraph wires contract time and space, disturbing and altering the perceptions of the bonds of affection that sentimentality saw as connecting loved ones over time and distance. This poem imagines a woman's war grief as bound by text traveling over a distance, further complicating sentiment's role in this war's notions of news and death. As Dillon, examining Karen Sanchez-Eppler's ideas, has written,

...sentimental writing aims to generate sensation defined in quite material terms. "Reading [it] is a bodily act," explains Karen Sanchez-Eppler. Sentimental writing "radically contracts the distance between narrated events and the moment of their reading, as the feelings in the story are made tangibly present in the flesh of the reader." (500)

"Giving the Mitten" offers a complex read on these ideas of sentiment, distance, bonds, reading, and war. Indeed, this poem's image of a thrilling newswire is itself an instance of how sentimental writing can be read as analogous to the telegraph wire, according to Sanchez-Eppler's terms, as both the newswire and sentimental texts "radically contract[] the distance between narrated events and the moment of their reading."

Both the poems that play with narrative time, where we as readers of the poem know more than the readers in the poems, as well as poems about buzzing telegraph wires, reflect a sense of doubleness or simultaneity during this war. These poems make present a sense of narrative time deployed during this war. The many poems detailing new ways of getting news, or poems about learning of a person's story, narrative, or death, toy with sentimental ideas of bonds, both affective and textual or narrative. The poems about newswires or about reading casualty lists at home display gaps of time and space that mattered so much during this war. In the poems, at least, these gaps are bound via reading --- reading the news from the telegraph wires, reading the news in letters, reading the news in lists, and reading the news in poems within the poems.

These poems about reading and mourning in the gaps or unbounded spaces of war are about both the bonds as well as the separations of war. In these poems, the boundary between the home front and the battlefront is both blurred and stark, and this sense of doubleness in the poems reflects that. In the telegraph wire poems, the reading-the-list poems, and the poems in the impossible present, narrative time is compressed, and reading becomes mourning in new ways.

This war and its poetry betray a new, compressed sense of time, narrative, reading, and narrative/fiction, which we can see in the Associated Press wire poems, in the poems about casualty lists anxiously awaited, and in the narrative time issues in so
many of these poems. These poetic tropes toy with ideas of the new(s), with war's sense of time and narration, and with ways of relaying war stories to those not there, who can only imagine what words can never explain or contain. As the poems suggest, news that travels over a distance, news that arrives from and to faraway battle scenes, is in essence fiction. News that comes from such disparate places as home is from battle, and battle is from home, is, according to the poems' tellings, unverifiable, is fraught with suspense and anxiety, and is essentially fabricated, is fictional. That these poems foreground reading and textuality while being in essence about the limits of text and words makes them all the more compelling.

In this war poetry's many poems about reading and getting news of loved ones, where mourning is entirely textual, the way these mourners receive this most intimate of news as a reading is new and of the moment, when the post office and the Associated Press and hundreds of new illustrated periodicals have altered the way people receive personal information. During the war, the publishing of literature slowed (Fahs 20), yet the war itself was made imaginatively into a book, as well as, in the postwar anthologies, a bound text to be read and read again. Reading the war poems in the daily illustrated papers took the place of other, more literary reading during the war, as reading the newspaper displaced other forms of literary culture. The war poems were more immediate, more pressing in the popular press. As Benedict Anderson reminds us, "...the newspaper is merely an 'extreme form' of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity." (34) The way these poems circulate, in the press, which is circulated, and, within the press, circulating from one paper to another (even across warring sections of the country) with no attribution, as well as the way letters home from soldiers and the letters and casualty and death lists to families circulate within the imagined worlds of the poems, demonstrates this collapsing of previously fixed boundaries of time and space. The boundaries between near and far, between battlefront and home front, as well as between life and death, reading and mourning, are destabilized in this war poetry, where new ways of getting news are foregrounded, and where text and reading are often conflated with mourning and death.

Many of these poems present getting the news of a loved one's death as "breaking the news," where the idea of breaking the news to someone is akin to breaking ties or breaking bonds. For example, in Frank Leslie's Illustrated News's "On Picket Before Petersburg," 18 March 1865, we read the line: "And for the tie it was my lot to break," when the narrator describes having to break the news of a soldier husband's death to a wife waiting at home. Readers read of this learning of death, and, in the poem, the characters hear news that serves to break ties. Learning this news will break a tie, it will sever a sentimental bond. In the war poems, "breaking the news" is itself a severing, an unstitching of the bonds of comfortable, expected, nonsuspenseful narrative, where "breaking news" is as traumatic as "breaking the news." Both are about disrupting, about severing the bonds of narrative consolation, of the expectations of sentimentality. These phrases themselves foreground the idea of disruption, of broken ties, of the unboundedness of this era's ways of getting this most personal of news in these public, published, imagined scenes in poem after republished poem.

Reading purportedly brings knowledge, makes connections, establishes bonds. And reading, according to historians of this war, was what those who remained at home relied upon to experience and accept the war. As Faust writes, "Survivors sought material
evidence that could convince their often 'rebellious hearts' of the unfathomable and intolerable news that confronted them....this need to make loss real by rendering it visible and tangible." (*This Republic of Suffering* 146) The material evidence that survivors sought, according to the poems, was invariably textual --- a letter, a poem, a telegram. Any word at all from a loved soldier, anything that could be read, any text, was eagerly sought. As Faust writes, "Death seemed ineffable, a void that she could understand best through the physicality of the letters that came no more." (146)

This private scene of reading, not knowing, and creating consoling fictions is presented as a national trope that defies sectionality in wartime, as these poems appear in both Northern and Southern publications. According to these poems, this intimate scene of textuality and mourning was repeatable, generic, and defined the nation's wartime grief. Our reading of the poems is accurate, though we're reading fiction, whereas the (purportedly nonfictional) reading within the poems is full of suspense and dread, and is often incomplete, failed, and not consolatory. As these poems about text and death seem to tell us, any knowledge that words might convey is meaningless in describing the moment of an individual's death. According to the poems, last words prove to be fictive. In these poems, no one knows with any sense of surety if their loved soldier is living or dead, and, if dead, what his last words, last texts, were. These poems point out the truism that those who remain behind to mourn can only imagine, can only create fiction, can also only picture forth the suspense, the search, the reading of the lists. These sentimental poems in the end point out the fictionality and inadequacy of all words in the face of death, while being about the centrality of these very words, this pervasive textuality.

Walt Whitman's war poem "Come up from the Fields, Father" (from *Walt Whitman's Drum-Taps*) is a rich example of the many war poems that grapple with this war's concerns with sentiment, mourning, and textuality:

Come up from the fields, father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door, mother, here's
a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves
fluttering in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and
grapes on the trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)
Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent
after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful,
and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come, father, come
at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry, mother, to the front door come right away.
Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous,
her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor
adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son,
O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black,
she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast,
cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,
At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah, now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

Grieve not so, dear mother (the just-grown
daughter speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd),
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.

Alas, poor boy, he will never be better (nor maybe
needs to be better, that brave and simple soul),
While they stand at home at the door he is
dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night
fitfully sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with
one deep longing,

O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent
from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead
son.

The poem starts right off with text: "Come up from the fields, father, here's a letter from our Pete./And come to the front door, mother, here's/a letter from thy dear son." The first
thing we know about is a letter. A text, this letter, is the thing that gathers the family from their various other duties. All come together to read, they gather because of a text, reminding us again of the importance of text in these poems, and in this poem in particular. Reading and interpretation are key to this poem. We read the lines "All swims before her eyes, flashes with black./she catches the main words only./Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast,/cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital./At present low, but will soon be better," and we are compelled to contemplate text and ideas of reading as they are bound up in grief and the fear of death. The poem details ways of reading ("she catches the main words only./Sentences broken"), making reading itself a way or a sign of mourning. The ways of reading indicate grief, the blurred vision and broken flow of words enact grief --- the way of reading here itself becomes grieving. It is a broken, confused reading, almost telegraphic in its punctuated, syncopated rhythm. The broken, incomplete reading instantiates the mother's grief, serving to conflate text and mourning.

In Whitman's poem, letters lie, text is deceptive: "See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better./Alas, poor boy, he will never be better." The "letter says," yet the poem informs us that this is untrue. The poem employs textual evidence and reading to allay suspense: "See...the letter says...." Ways of knowing here are entirely textual. The characters in the poem seek proof through text, through reading, looking at whose hand has penned the letter, as well as parsing the words and reading haltingly, and finally holding up the letter as absolute proof to assuage their grief. Yet reading and textual interpretation in this poem prove to be flawed, inaccurate. The letter in the poem consoles even as it lies; it presents fiction that is closely read and eagerly waited for. According to the poem's implications, war mourners cannot count on reading and words to allay suspense with sure knowledge. This poem, a read text about reading and mourning, undercuts all sense of reading's and text's consolation in times of mourning. We, as well as the imagined mourners within the poem, are confronted with the unbearable fact that words, story, narrative --- text --- are ultimately unreliable, that they lead us on or give us nothing accurate. This news comes as a surprise, despite the fact that the poem itself is entirely fictive and therefore premised on falsity and fabrication. The poem points up what is known and unknown, that is, the sure knowledge that reading here promises yet can never truly offer. The poem shows how this war's imagined mourners rely on text for knowledge that, because it is read, can never be definitive. The poem serves to remind us of the instability of text, of the doubleness of words, of fiction. Whitman's poem grapples with ways of knowing, with issues of proof and mourning, yet reading and interpretation within the poem prove to be flawed and tragically inaccurate. In this poem, texts lie, and they are deeply inconsolatory.

The line "See...the letter says..." in Whitman's "Come up from the Fields, Father" points to the way this poem, and many others during this war, imagines scenes of familial reading and textual evidence as ways to allay the suspense of war grief. Scenes of reading together appear often in these war poems. The nation is often pictured as reading together, either as a family at home reading the casualty lists in the papers, or as a community reading a bulletin board of posted casualty lists out loud together. Communal reading becomes communal mourning in interesting ways. This occurs, for example, in the poem "In Time of War," from Harper's Weekly, 15 August 1863:

There are white faces in each sunny street,
And signs of trouble meet us every where;
The nation's pulse hath an unsteady beat,
For scents of battle foul the summer air.

A thrill goes through the city's busy life,
And then—as when a strong man stints his breath—
A stillness comes; and each one in his place
Waits for the news of triumph, loss, and death.

The “Extras” fall like rain upon a drought,
And startled people crowd around the board
Whereon the nation's sum of loss or gain
In rude and hurried characters is scored.

Perhaps it is a glorious triumph gleam—
An earnest of our Future's recompense;
Perhaps it is a story of defeat,
Which smiteth like a fatal pestilence.

But whether Failure darkens all the land,
Or whether Victory sets its blood ablaze,
An awful cry, a mighty throb of pain,
Shall scare the sweetness from these summer days.

God! how this land grows rich in loyal blood!
Poured out upon it to its utmost length,
The incense of a people's sacrifice—
The wrested offering of a people's strength!

It is the costliest land beneath the sun!
'Tis priceless; purchaseless! And not a rood
But hath its title written clear and signed
In some slain hero's consecrated blood.

And not a flower that gems its mellowing soil
But thriveth well beneath the holy dew
Of tears, that ease a nation's straining heart,
When the Lord of battles smites it through and through.

The wait for news in this poem is a wait for text, a wait for a scoring. "The 'Extras' fall like rain upon a drought,/And startled people crowd around the board/Whereon the nation's sum of loss or gain/In rude and hurried characters is scored." The text of war death is scored --- it is written, engraved, as well as calling to mind a keeping score, an accounting, a reckoning, which the poem gestures at when it talks of what will be scored: "the nation's sum of loss or gain." This poem is all about war as text, about the horrors of war as reading material: "Perhaps it is a story of defeat," "And not a rood/But hath its title
written clear and signed/In some slain hero's consecrated blood." The war effort itself is made into text, an embodied text that is written in blood.

The many poems imagining the nation reading, and grieving, singly and yet bound together remind us of Benedict Anderson's argument in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Anderson's "imagined community" is about the bonds of reading, just as these war poems are about the bonds of sentimentality, reading, and the nation. As Anderson writes, "An American will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 240,000-odd fellow Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity." (26) Fahs touches on this as well when she writes, "To what extent does this social aspect of reading, and of print culture more generally, mean that popular literature created the 'fictive affective bonds' that some have seen as a precondition to nationalism?" (9)

In the numerous communal reading poems published during the war, the nation is pictured as bound together in its individual griefs, which is both a very sentimental image as well as an interesting image of unified nationalism during a time of sectional war. As Anderson has argued, reading and nationhood are inextricably linked. We read these lines in *Harper's Weekly*'s poem "The Vacant Place," 10 June 1865: "When at last one morn from a paper./Where the words seemed strangely blurred,/I read the name of our hero/In a long, long list of killed." Grief is reading, a "strangely blurred" reading, a reading imbued with sorrow, obscured by tears. Just as in Anderson ("The significance of this mass ceremony --- Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers --- is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion." (Anderson 35)), in the reading-the-list poems those who remain at home are imagined as reading the same paper singly yet bound together. But in the poems everyone is reading for something different. They are each looking for a different name, a purportedly unique word; they are each performing a unique reading. Each reader in the poems has his own individual reading, his own interpretation, his own right reading.

I am arguing that this war poetry often makes grief textual, and in so doing makes the war itself readable in complex ways, and Anderson has claimed that the idea of nation is often bound in interesting ways to reading, both in terms of reading the newspapers as well as reading novels. Anderson writes, "Why this transformation should be so important for the birth of the imagined community of the nation can best be seen if we consider the basic structure of two forms of imagining which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper. For these forms provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation. Consider first the structure of the old-fashioned novel....It is clearly a device for the presentation of simultaneity in 'homogeneous, empty time,' or a complex gloss upon the word 'meanwhile.'" (24--25 ) The sense of nation during this war was a very textual sense, if we listen to the war poems. The imagined community during this war was imagined via text, as Anderson suggests, yet it is additionally an imagined community that is bound up in textual imagery and textual tropes, with all of their implications.
The war poems about communal reading are often about images of crowding out. Readers get jostled while attempting to see the posted texts, according to the poems, and in the process varying interpretations and alternate readings get crowded out as well. Suspense and crowding out in terms of reading are everywhere in these poems. The poems, in imagining jostling, reading crowds, also gesture at ideas of the crowding out of competing narratives, competing versions, competing texts. The imagined public, posted reading-the-list poems reflect what was often the reality, according to Faust, who writes, "Although civilians crowded news offices and railroad junctions waiting for information, the lists were notoriously inaccurate and incomplete." (This Republic of Suffering 104)

The reading-the-list poems were often about crowding out, as well as about the incomplete knowledge, inaccuracy, and anxiety that this crowded reading engenders. The reading in the public reading-the-list poems brings no sure knowledge, instead fostering anxiety and suspense, all in terms of text and grief. As Fahs writes of the period, "No longer was the news delivered by a 'single bulletin' or courier, as in the past; instead, 'almost hourly paragraphs' made readers 'restless always for the last fact or rumor they are telling.'" (19) The reading-the-list poems are filled with images of mourners reading newspapers and bulletin boards, and seemingly the entire nation is rapt, restless, and reading.

Herman Melville's poem "Donelson" (though not published in the popular press, Melville's war poems explicitly make use of popular newspaper accounts of the war) offers another reading of the reading-the-list poem. Melville's "Donelson" is not just about the trope of reading and hearing the news and lists; it is also about ironizing the entire journalistic popular imaginings and representations of the war that other war poems are indebted to. We can see in Mellelville's "Donelson" how the notion of war as text can also be read as a version of editing, as a take on the material histories of revised texts.

"Donelson" is about the act of negotiating inherent in public reading. In the long poem, the list, the text of the dead and missing, is tossed around, crowds jostle to read it or hear it read, and collaborative meanings are read into the list and interpreted. In the imagined scenes of the poem, competing narratives are shut out. The crowd of readers engage in a collaborative jostling, yet, in choosing one "tall man" to read aloud, the poem alights on one reading, one version. And every reader or listener in the scene is indeed only reading or listening for one word, one name, one version (just as the war-poem anthologies discussed in this dissertation's conclusion aim to present one view of the war, and to present one kind of reconciliation-minded reader). Eventually only one narrative holds, only one name is sought by each reader/listener. "Donelson," like other reading-the-list poems, presents a certain kind of reading, a reading informed by and suffused with suspense for multiple possible outcomes, but which in the end narrows down to a univocal, bound text. This reminds us yet again of this war poetry's ideas of reading, interpretation, suspense, multiple versions, and the one "right reading" that dispenses with suspense and offers no consolation.

In "Donelson" reading is an act of anticipation as well as an act of negotiation, where the meanings and effects of war can be read through, read into the casualty list, and negotiated, which calls to mind one way that Kete explains sentimentality as the "...collaborative reimagination of the contingent and vulnerable into the permanent." (105) The poem is about collaborative meaning making as well as the contradictory impulse of crowding out other meanings, about ways of looking for and finding one
"right" reading. Melville's poem on collaborative meaning making and public reading is usually read as an indictment of the easy overlay of sentimentality in this period's literature. Yet many of the now unread popular war poems of this era offer a more complex view of how the war inflected sentimentality and how sentimentality inflected the war in and through images and ideas of text. "Donelson" is part of this now-unread genre or subset of poems that comment on the complexity of sentiment, text, and war death. "Donelson"'s concern with crowding out competing narratives and with ways of getting and reading war news offers another perspective on this era's poetry's ideas of collaboration, revision, and the "crowding out" of a multiplicity of meanings. Many of these war poems (as well as the later war-poem anthologies) offer a complex reading on the idea of the proliferation of meanings among the traces left by someone after his death, traces that may need an editor, a reader, and a bound book to preserve this former life and to make it legible. This war as well as this era's sentimental ideals come together in the war poetry to grapple imaginatively with concerns about what happens after a soldier's untimely death, concerns about who will stitch together the soldier's, and the nation's, war story for the mourners left behind to read.

Melville's "Donelson" makes much of the idea of crowding out, and in doing so the poem calls our attention to connections between reading and grief. In this poem, reading is fraught with anxiety. The anxiety of reading, the circuitousness of reading and knowing, where readers (both in the poem and of the poem) and mourners never have a sure footing, is foregrounded, as can be seen in these lines taken from the long poem:

'No seeing here,' cries one --- 'don't crowd' ---
'You tall man, pray you, read aloud.'

***

Washed by the storm till the paper grew
Every shade of a streaky blue,
That bulletin stood. The next day brought
A second.

***

Events unfold.

***

'Ugh! ugh!
'Twill drag along --- drag along.'

***

'Win or lose,' he pausing said,
'Caps fly the same; all the boys, mere boys;
Any thing to make a noise.
Like to see the list of the dead;'

***

Silently posted this brief sheet:

***

'Well, well, go on!' exclaimed the crowd
To him who thus much read aloud.
'That's all,' he said. 'What! nothing more?'

***
(Our own reporter a dispatch compiles,
As best he may, from varied sources.)

***
The stillness stealing through the throng
She silent thought and dismal fear revealed;
   They turned and went,
   Musing on right and wrong
   And mysteries dimly sealed ---

This is a long reading-the-list poem, as well as a reading the news poem, and Melville makes much of the image of people reading aloud, gathered in a public place. The poem intersperses scenes of reading with scenes of battle, as if the poem is a split-screen, showing simultaneous live scenes that inflect and reflect each other, forcing us as readers to consider scenes of reading to be causally connected to scenes of war's battle.

The reading in this poem is marked as news, as text that seems live from the field as well as text that those who wait for it use to interpret and give shape to the very war that the news is about. The anxious readers in the poem crowd around the bulletin board seeking news of their loved soldiers, looking to see if the soldiers' names are on the posted list of the war's wounded and dead ("About the bulletin-board a band/Of eager, anxious people met"). Reading the posted text, the news, is an extended enterprise in this very long poem, where the war as a result becomes text, becomes the thing that is read and interpreted --- even fought over, or warred over --- as battlefield fighting happens in parallel scenes. Images of an anxious, fraught reading aloud make up the movement of half the poem ("'Well, well, go on!' exclaimed the crowd/To him who thus much read aloud"), as the other half of the poem is composed of scenes of battle that are being read about.

After the anxious crowd asks a tall man to go on reading, we read, "'That's all,' he said. 'What! nothing more?'" This line points to the textual nature of this imagined war. The anxious readers here mourn the names they fear having to read on the posted list, and they also mourn the bittersweet nature of reading, and of life itself, both of which can end suddenly, before anyone is ready for them to end: "'What! nothing more?'" Both reading and the soldiers' read lives can come to an end abruptly, leaving those who are left behind reading to grieve.

War in Melville's poem becomes a published, public text, one whose meanings are vied over aloud and are subject to being crowded out and collaborated upon. The poem emphasizes the importance of text and reading in relation to war and mourning. The lines "'No seeing here,' cries one --- 'don't crowd' ---'You tall man, pray you, read aloud,,'" point to the central role of text and anxious reading in this poem. This is a public, communal reading. It is a reading aloud that hints at ideas of interpretation and "right reading," where competing narratives are crowded out. The mourning, anxious readers jostle and crowd around the posted text, each wanting to read for themselves, until they determine that they cannot all read at once, so they decide a tall man, who can see more, should read aloud to all of them. This image of one overarching reader, one superior reading, gestures at ideas of interpretation and editing, where one way of reading is elevated, encouraged, and privileged. And here the imperative "'don't crowd'" furthers this notion by calling to mind a winnowing, a homing in on one right reading, a less
crowded perspective. (In this sense, "Donelson" is a reading-the-list poem as well as a poem about gathering, about collections --- a gathering together to read, as well as a crowding out of other readings and other readers; a sentimental bonding in reading and, at the same time, a reading that marks boundaries between readings and between readers --- reminding us of an anthology, a point that will be elaborated upon further in this dissertation's conclusion.)

Textual ideas of right reading and interpretation are brought up again in the parenthetical lines "(Our own reporter a dispatch compiles,/As best he may, from varied sources.)" Here we are reminded of the textuality of war in the fact that, within the narrative of the poem, this is set off visually in parentheses, marking it explicitly as text, as a written and read thing. And the sentiment behind the typography also points to the centrality of text, where war news is compiled by a reporter from various sources. We are made to think of compilations, of collaborations. Melville reminds us here that reading in this war and of this war is never a definitive, univocal thing; it is constantly negotiated and contested, layered and collected, as an anthology would be. War is a text to be read, but, in this poem and in many others of the period, it is never a simple, straightforward reading. There is no single, uncrowded reading, no uncontested meaning, no one source. There are competing narratives culled from various news accounts that get crowded out, there are various versions gathered from varied sources.

Text here is unstable, is unreliable, yet the anxious readers in the poem gravitate toward the posted words in an attempt at some sort of interpretation of the war, an attempt at a right reading, a single, circumscribed text, which the poem belies on many levels. Reading, mourning passersby in the poem seem to live for these posted words, this constantly updated news. They are pictured as passing the news bulletins day and night, waiting for word, waiting for news, waiting for text that will help them bind and make meaning of their grief. The following lines, with their "wistful people passing," anxiously waiting for the consolations of text, waiting for something to read, for "more news" and for a "story" of war, show up the way text and live news dispatches are interwoven into the narrative of this poem, just as they are interwoven into the image of war itself that the poem presents:

The reader ceased, the storm beat hard;

***

That night the board stood barren there,
Oft eyed by wistful people passing,
Who nothing saw but the rain-beads chasing
Each other down the wafered square,
As down some storm-beat grave-yard stone.
But next day showed ---
MORE NEWS LAST NIGHT.
STORY OF SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

"Donelson" intercuts scenes of reading with scenes of battle, thereby confusing and conflating both text and war wounding. And within the scenes of reading, the poem makes clear that news and text are all important, that the characters in the poem rely utterly on text to interpret their war experience, as we can see in these lines:
For lists of killed and wounded, see
The morrow's dispatch: to-day 'tis victory.

***
The man who read this to the crowd
Shouted as the end he gained;
And though the unflagging tempest rained,
They answered him aloud.
And hand grasped hand, and glances met
In happy triumph; eyes grew wet.

***
But others were who wakeful laid
In midnight beds, and early rose,
And, feverish in the foggy snows,
Snatched the damp paper --- wife and maid.
The death-list like a river flows
Down the pale street.
And there the whelming waters meet.

Those who remain at home in this poem live by and for text. Those who celebrate do so because of what has been "read...to the crowd," and those who mourn do so because of what they anticipate reading once they "[s]natch[] the damp paper" and peruse the "death-list." Text profoundly informs the experience of war at home, according to this poem. Both relieved shouting and anxious waiting are attributed to text, to reading.

In "Donelson" text is highlighted and singled out as the key to experiencing war, both in the poem's narrative, as well as typographically, on the page. The following lines make this clear:

Lew Wallace, moving to retake
The heights late lost ---
(Herewith a break.
Storms at the West derange the wires.
Doubtless, ere morning, we shall hear
The end; we look for news to cheer ---
Let Hope fan all her fires.)

Next day in large bold hand was seen
The closing bulletin:
VICTORY!

The war narrative is interrupted, broken up, by a parenthetical aside, reminding us that this is indeed an authored text we are reading, that this account of war is shaped and presented in a certain way, by a certain narrator. The parentheses serve to interrupt the flow of narrative, the flow of the war as text. And this textual interruption marks an interruption in textual transmission within the narrative itself, as the parentheses mark a break in the newswire transmission of a war story: "(Herewith a break./Storms at the
West derange the wires..." The poem is detailing the story of war, and then the poem itself breaks up typographically at the moment the war story breaks up over the wire. Yet, as the poem indicates, the readers in the poem, as well as the readers of the poem, will continue to "look for news to cheer," will continue to look for textual consolation. And indeed, "Next day in large bold hand was seen/The closing bulletin:/VICTORY!" Here again text is highlighted, in the mention of the "large bold hand" of type, as well as the actual showing of this large bold hand in the completely capitalized line, again calling our attention to the fact of reading, to the fact of text, of news, as a part of the experience of this war.

The poem, even as it is larded with scenes of reading, suggests that reading brings no solace, it offers no sure knowledge and no one conclusion. We read of "[t]he stillness stealing through the throng/The silent thought and dismal fear revealed;/They turned and went./Musing on right and wrong/And mysteries dimly sealed --- " The poem suggests that this war news gives readers pause, that this reading disturbs their previous interpretations of war. This war is a text to be read, whose meanings are unstable and unclear, whose interpretations can be jostled over in the crowd. And, as the poem conveys, even after reading together, these anxious readers leave the bulletin-board singly, each musing separately on what they have heard. This war reading offers no one answer, no right reading, no agreed-upon interpretation that will bind readers together.

Even after reading the war together, these readers leave with war's "mysteries dimly sealed --- " Yet in the poem, the next day brings new reading, new postings to the bulletin-board. The poem suggests that each day brings a new text, a new way of reading the war, with new interpretations. The poem's alternating scenes of quizzical reading with gruesome battle force us as readers to engage with ideas of the war as a text, one that has multiple meanings with no one right, proscribed way of reading it.

This destabilizing idea of reading and text during war is touched on by Melville's critics. Looking ahead to this dissertation's conclusion on the war poem anthologies and reunion, we might remember that, as Lee Rust Brown and Timothy Sweet have shown us, Melville was one war poet who radically diverged from a sentimental, reunificatory effort (an effort that the war poem anthologists were invested in). Melville rejects the anthologists' easy reunion and rebinding, and, as Brown writes, "...his Civil War poems also warn that a merely mechanical union, riveted together [like an anthology] on the utilitarian basis proper to modern war, will leave little room for the founding dreams of either politics or poetry." (xv) As Sweet explains,

Since the beginning of his artistic career, Melville had explored the means by which both political and aesthetic structures of representation prescribe the relations between the subject and the state. In *Battle-Pieces* he continues his exploration to discover that the violence of the Civil War cannot be attached in any meaningful way to a democratic ideology. Rather than providing a stable ideological foundation for the restoration of the American state, the war merely prefigures its own endless repetition....To write poetry about war is, in some sense, always to aestheticize it; poetry necessarily evades "the real war" (mentioned but not represented by Whitman) because it is only a representation. If war poetry is
never quite about war, in *Battle-Pieces* it is often about the trace that the Civil War has left on the apparatus of poetry. The *Battle-Pieces* reflect critically on the cultural function of the affirmative poetry of the Civil War, which was to aestheticize and thereby legitimate war, patriotism, and the state. (164 and 180)

Melville provides an interesting counterpoint to the sentimental poets and anthology makers that I look at because his war poems defy the postwar answers that the sentimental anthologies offer, and yet they pose some of the same questions about textuality and intertextuality that the poems in the popular press are toying with. (Another poet who questions the frictionless ending to the sectionality of the war is Sarah Morgan Piatt. Coleman Hutchison writes of "...the resistance that she puts up to the fictions of war and remembrance that shape cultural practice in America at the time...." (77))

Throughout this war's popular poetry, words console as much as they confound. Grief is experienced through and translated into text, and it is this textual grief that these war poems both prize as well as point out as false. Words in these many poems are all that is left of the dead soldiers, so in that sense readers cherish them. According to the poems, words are what heal and preserve. Yet at the same time texts are shown to be a sham, a fashioned fiction that cannot offer sure answers or relief from true doubt or grief. In this way, through these many poems that portray a read grief, we can see the era's ideals of sentimental bonding and consolation being questioned and rearranged, yet, by the end of the war, as I will show in this dissertation's conclusion about anthologies, the upset and confusion shown to be at the heart of this war and within the seemingly comforting confines of sentimentality is patched back together in an effort to create an idealized looking back as well as a confident looking forward that will be free from doubt and discord.
Chapter Three: Learning to Read Unjustified Bodies: "And his wounds to tell the story"

War, at its most visceral, is about broken, mangled, wounded bodies, both soldiers' bodies as well as the body, or land, of the state. America's Civil War produced an abundance of popular poetry, stories, and images of damaged bodies of all kinds. This war's issues of text and wounding seemed to infuse the nation as a whole, as can be seen in an image from the ubiquitous Julia Ward Howe poem "The Battle Hymn of the Republic": "I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel," where holy words are written in rows of wounding artillery. It is the unique confluence of mid-nineteenth-century sentimentality and this particular war's violence that I want to consider when looking at some of this period's popular poems' and images' depictions of the broken human bodies of war. In this chapter I will look at these poems' ways of writing on and writing about the wounded soldier's body, examining the era's anxieties about the integrity of the body during war and after. In light of sentimentality's concern with loss and the bonds of connection, these poems about war's broken bodies and broken bonds tell an interesting story.

Marianne Noble writes, "A wound is a gap, a metaphor for the absence of the other." (137) This is a particularly striking way of thinking about wounds in the context of the Civil War, with the value it places on sentimental bonds, bounds, and stitching. Binding a wound is closing a gap, binding an open space on the body. The gap in the body that needs binding can be read as an open space that represents the unknown or unknowable --- a fissure in knowing that needs to be bound to be known, healed, and restored. Binding a wound is a way to contain and explain, a way to make knowable or articulate what is gaping and inarticulate, disjointed. Binding a wound contains disarticulation. (All of which calls to mind the concern so many of the war poems evidence with words that convey their own failure at articulation.) We might also remember in thinking about wounds and gaps on the body that sentimental bonds in the war era are seen as both what might bind a gap closed, as well as what might stand in for or represent what is not there, for what represents the gap.

Wounds on the body in these poems are presented as disarticulation --- disjointed bodies become disjointed words. Sentimental unity or bonds are broken, they become disarticulated, and this disjointedness becomes all the more poignant in sentimental poems about bodily wounds when we remember that one of the aims of sentimental texts was to move you physically --- to have the words, during each reading, move through readers' bodies in their breath, their tears, their heartache. In sentimental literature, where body and text are meant to mingle, poems about wounded and mangled war bodies hinge on this corporeality of reading.

The wounded, gaping bodies call to mind the gaping onlookers in this era's empty sleeve poems, as well as all the gaps in sentiment's bonds that these poems translate to text. I will show how this war poetry made a veritable sentimental text of the war's many wounded bodies, where often bodily wounds themselves are imagined as being writing on the body. The popular war poetry of the era wrote the wounded bodies as text, and into text. These poems call our attention to how felt a war this was, how it affected the bodies of the soldiers in their wounds and scars, how it affected the bodies of the
mourners at home through their bodily grief and through the physical destruction of cherished sentimental bonds, and how it affected reading itself in producing a body of poetry all about the conflation of wounds, scars, and text.

Noble looks at this literature's confluence of sentiment, wounding, and reading in her analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: "He is reformed by a sentimental wound....She asks the Birds if they have ever lost a child, a question that was 'thrust on a new wound.' When the Birds answer yes, Eliza explains, 'Then you will feel for me. I have lost two.' This fictional example illustrates Stowe's own literary method: she thrusts into readers' preexisting wounds, forcing them to 'feel for' slaves by reexperiencing their own painful separations and other forms of suffering. This wounding forces a new mode of cognition upon readers, who are to understand slavery through their memories of sorrow rather than through reason, and thereby apprehend the 'plain right thing' that logic conceals." (129--130) Noble explicates an understanding through sorrow, through the body, through pain, which these war poems also promote. (This also calls to mind the claim of the war poetry anthologizers that remembering and mourning loss through reading and rereading will rewrite the nation's wounds --- a healing through text --- and create united, national citizens, which I will look at more carefully in the conclusion to this dissertation.)

As the war went on, the poems about the wounded soldiers changed tenor, from one of spirited jingoism to poems that mark the many losses of war with real pathos and textual complexity. As Fahs asserts, "This was not a nationalism located in the subordination of the individual to the demands of the Union or Confederacy, as early in the war; rather, this was a tender, individualized nationalism that located the very essence of the nation's meaning in the individual bodies of wounded soldiers," (111--112) and, "Such a task required a form of imaginative sympathy that deepened the war's meanings for observers, as they found in the bodies of wounded and dying soldiers a new and revelatory way of comprehending country." (119)

The wounds of war in these poems are essentially a national writing on the body, by patriotic combatants called to action by the state to inscribe wounds on each other and on the land. This war's wounds, in the war poetry of the time, were in effect a national rewriting of the body, the newly unjustified, uneven body, written by the newly bound, stitched together, "cured" nation, as represented by the war poets and the war poetry anthologists. Samuels links these war wounds with a national writing, where the bodies of the war become the nation's text: "If the nation was a 'house divided,' it was also a house haunted by the great scale of wounding, a production of disabled bodies far surpassing the astonishing array of corpses. And that wounding --- a disturbing form of writing national identities on the body --- may paradoxically appear materially invasive and representationally overwhelming because so much was done to represent it." (*Facing America* 12)

These representations took the form, partly, in poem after poem about war's wounded, written upon, and written out bodies. The intermingling of wounds, bodies, and text can also be found in many illustrations from the era. For example, Winslow Homer's
Homer's illustration is entitled "News from the War," and it is largely about the texts of war, the reading of war (as detailed earlier in this dissertation). Yet one vignette has no actual text, no papers to be read or written upon. The scene with the two war-wounded soldiers on a street in Richmond is particularly striking in that it is nominally a scene of "war news," yet it is devoid of words to be read, pages to be held. Rather, this scene appears to present the two wounded soldiers, with their injured and missing limbs, as the war news. These two soldiers' mutilated bodies are the texts to be read, these injured bodies are the war news that the passersby on the street (as well as the illustration's viewers) are meant to "read." These injured bodies are text, they are rendered legible, just as much as the letters, newspapers, and sketches in the surrounding vignettes are, speaking to the same issues of war wounds and text that so many of the popular poems imagine.

Pain, war's wounds, and war's words are ever present in the popular war poetry. Just one of numerous examples of the intermingling of text and wounds can be found in the poem "Little Giffen of Tennessee," by Francis O. Ticknor, in the anthology Bugle-Echoes:

...in death's despite
The crippled skeleton learned to write!
"Dear mother" at first, of course: and then,
"Dear captain" --- inquiring about "the men."
Captain's answer --- "Of eighty and five,
Giffen and I are left alive!"
"Johnston's pressed at the front, they say!"
Little Giffen was up and away.
A tear, his first, as he bade good-bye,
Dimmed the glint of his steel-blue eye:
"I'll write, if spared." There was news of a fight,
But none of Giffen. He did not write!

Here wounds and writing are conflated. Though the soldier is a "crippled skeleton," his sole aim is to "learn to write," making the pain of the body textual. Here text is both part of the war and injury, as well as part of a (failed) recovery. To write --- text making --- is what this near-dead soldier feels compelled to do, and the image of a "crippled skeleton" "learn[ing] to write" shows the extent to which injury, death, and text are mingled in this poetry. By the end of the poem, the sign given for Little Giffen's demise is merely that "He did not write!" This one phrase, this simple exclamation, marks this poetry's complex conception of the relation between death and text. Not writing, not making text, is made to signify wounding and dying.

For many of the poets in this period, remembering and feeling is reading wounded bodies, as evidenced from this stanza of "The Empty Sleeve" in The Southern Illustrated News, 13 December 1862:

Bravely your arm in battle strove,
Freely, for Freedom's sake, you gave it;
It has perished — but a nation's love
In proud remembrance will save it.

In this stanza, the arm that has been given up for freedom and is now missing from the soldier's body is saved in the memory of the nation, and is also textually saved in this poem.

In another of the many examples of this textual trope, H. L. Flash's poem "Zollicoffer" from the anthology War Songs of the South asserts that wounds on soldiers' bodies are like words on a page, telling us a story if we care to read them:

First in the fight, and first in the arms
Of the white-winged angels of glory,
With the heart of the South at the feet of God,
And his wounds to tell the story.
And the blood that flowed from his hero heart,
On the spot where he nobly perished,
Was drunk by the earth as a sacrament
In the holy cause he cherished.
In Heaven a home with the brave and blessed,
And for his soul's sustaining,
The apocalyptic eyes of Christ ---
And nothing on earth remaining,
But a handful of dust in the land of his choice,
A name in song and story,
And Fame to shout with her brazen voice,
"DIED ON THE FIELD OF GLORY."

This poem tells of a wounded soldier whose war experience cannot be summarized or fit into words, but whose bodily wounds speak for themselves. The wounded, injured body speaks for the soldier, making the pain of the nation legible on the body. His body has become a telling text, it is something we can read of, in the poem, and that those in the poem can see as legible, as telling stories. The line "[a]nd his wounds to tell the story" presents the wounded body as a primer, a text that tells the story of this war more movingly and more immediately than any words the disjointed soldier might articulate (to articulate being a compelling verb in the sense of texts' and bodies' connections). The wounded body speaks for itself, it is the soldier's text, it is his story, and it needs no elaboration, no scaffolding of verbal text. The injured, unjustified body is the most basic, immediately telling text.

Similarly, the Continental Monthly's "Our Wounded," 1 October 1862, makes of wounds words on a page that will be read and interpreted as the story of war, a story written in freedom's blood:

Wounded! O sweet-lipped word! for on the page
Of this strange history, all these scars shall be
The hieroglyphics of a valiant age,
Deep writ in freedom's blood-red mystery.

War's wounds are transcribed to text, and the wounded, bloodied body is textualized. These scars that are translated to text, to words, are indeed inscrutable text, deep writ and requiring deciphering, like a hieroglyphic. This poem imagines wounds on soldiers' bodies as being textualized and translated into the text of history, obscurely written in blood, and requiring translation.

White Southerners as well as black Southerners saw the war as about their own, entirely opposed, senses of freedom (which both complicate the era's notions of sentimentality, bonds, and bounds). This war poetry shows its readers the many links between text, wounding, freedom, and national meaning making (where the state is imagined as writing on soldiers' bodies in the form of scars as a way to pen a story of freedom to be read and reread).

War's wounds and scars are tokens from the field that are now inscribed, written on the body, as gestured at in this line from Harper's Weekly's poem "A Cry from the Army," 9 January 1864, about former soldiers "Who bear the tokens of that field/In many a glorious scar," as well as in "The Empty Sleeve," from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 30 May 1863: "Though it points to a myriad seams and scars." Soldiers' bodies are seamed and scarred; they are broken and unbound, calling to mind how this war separated and opened fissures in the bonds that sentimentality prized.

These wounds, seams, and scars point to all the ways this war poetry figured the pressures brought to bear on the bonds of sentimentality, through images of fissures, cleavings, lines, borders, sutures, sections, dissections, dismemberments, and even the atomizing blazons of wounded bodies and their empty sleeves. The soldiers' bodies that
bear the tokens of the field in their scars are also imagined as being written upon. In
effect, the nation writes its war story on its soldiers' bodies, both on the battlefield itself,
where the nation essentially inscribes the body through patriotic wounds, as well as in
poem after poem that wounds the soldier over and over with each publication, each new
reading, by textually picturing forth the wounds in great detail.

In so many of these popular war poems, what we are left with are the remains, the
fragments, the broken pieces: of bodies, of families, of communities, of the nation.
Broken bonds and fragments are to be found everywhere in these poems (which are
themselves textually even and whole, with no gaps or fissures in rhyme or form). The
poems picture forth both the bodily remains left from the war, as well as the broken
homes that then remain in fragments from war's sorrow. It is striking that such even
metrical feet can so many times over detail all variety of mangling, telling time after time
in seemingly loving detail of all "...the bits of the dead" (from "The Harvest of Death"
in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War).

These sentimental war poems are part of an effort to overcome physical
separateness --- that is, the distance and separation that war creates, in individual
wounded bodies and the separations of parts of the body from the whole (through war
injury and amputation), between soldiers and loved ones, as well as for the national body
that is now divided into warring sections. Many of these poems can be read as part of an
effort to bind these separated things back together into a sentimental whole.

The wounded war bodies in this poetry are often about repairing bonds through
binding texts. Fahs explores the ways sentimentalism imagined war's wounds. As Fahs
writes,

A vast antebellum popular literature shared Stowe's concern with the
Christian-influenced themes of sacrifice, suffering, and
redemption --- especially through the vehicle of the suffering body.
With the coming of war, the wounded, dying, and dead bodies of
soldiers became the vehicle for a new sentimentalism that fused
patriotism and Christianity. Sentimentalism provided a way of
making sense of the bodily sacrifices of soldiers within an
explicitly Christian framework. It also allowed wartime writers to
cope with a central problem posed by the war: the shocking
anonymity of suffering and death undergone by ordinary soldiers
far from home. This was an aspect of war that many Americans
found unbearable: they simply could not accept that soldiers'
suffering and death would go unsung and unmourned. (95--96)

I will look closely at some of the many "empty sleeve" poems, as well as other poems
about bodily injury during the war, to better see what "[t]hese words recover and
remember." (Samuels Facing America 61)

These war poems about injured bodies can be read as playing off the very
definition and etymology of the word injury itself, making the bodies depicted in the
poems not only wounded, but specifically, in-jured, or unjust and unjustified, textually
uneven. In these war poems about in-jured, un-just bodies, wounded soldiers are
portrayed as unjustified lines of text, and we as readers of the poems, as well as the
readers portrayed within the poems, are meant "...to read their bodies," as Faust writes in her article "The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying." (13) These depicted bodies are to be read, but they are unaligned, unjustified, partially illegible, untidy, and unedited until the poet-narrator within the poems parses, edits, and explains them.

These unjustified war bodies are both textually uneven as well as not valued, not worth much, lacking justification. These imagined injured bodies are marginalized socially and economically after the war, and their empty sleeves become text, become marginalia to be read by those they see on the street. Indeed, many of the empty sleeve poems detail the postwar poverty and indigence of wounded soldiers, depicting how they can no longer work and support those who remain at home, and often the poems themselves indicate that they (both the texts of the poems, as well as, in one poem, "The Last Letter," the injured, amputated body parts) were meant to be sold, text-making and poem-selling being the only remunerative work the veteran soldier can engage in now, "though lopped and bruised his frame" (from "The Volunteer's Return," by Edward Willis, in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War).

Quite a few of the empty sleeve poems of the war and postwar announce themselves explicitly as money-makers, where the poem, or text, performs the work that the soldier's body can no longer accomplish, demonstrating the alliance between the commercial and the sentimental. For example, in "Harry Gilmore, the One Armed Boy," from the Library of Congress Broadsides, we read:

Wounded at Petersburg, Va.
Strangers, when the fight was fiercest
   Where my comrades round me fell,
I was wounded in the trenches
   By the bursting of a shell.
Hundreds died, all crushed and mangled;
   Some, in agony of pain,
Bit the very earth beneath them,
   Soaked with life-blood of the slain.
It was not my fate to perish
   In the storm of iron hail,
But a MUTILATED SOLDIER,
   I have come to tell the tale ---
That ten thousand are repeating
   Through our peaceful land to-day,
How they fought and how they suffered
   In the din of battle fray.
Mine is but a simple story,
   And I need not make it long:
Only in your joy and plenty,
   Buy a copy of my song.

The "mutilated soldier" has not died, but instead has "come to tell the tale." The story of his mutilated, unjustified body is now all that he has to offer, all that he can sell. Yet this tale is never directly told in the poem, it is merely indirectly referenced: "How they
fought and how they suffered." It is as if the phrase "MUTILATED SOLDIER" speaks for itself, is text enough. Even typographically this phrase speaks for itself, as it is in quotation marks and all capital letters, calling attention to its own textuality, marking mutilation as text.

His is "but a simple story," needing no embellishment or extemporizing, yet it is meant to be performed, it seems. In this poem the poet-soldier is imagined as a busker or minstrel, coming to tell his tale, to tell the "simple story" of his injury, in the hopes that someone will "[b]uy a copy of [his] song." The pairing of the lines "But a MUTILATED SOLDIER,/I have come to tell the tale --- " points to the poem's conflation of bodily injury and text. The poet appears to be in essence making a tale of his wounds, where mutilation itself is a telling tale, calling to mind the line "[a]nd his wounds to tell the story" from the poem "Zollicoffer." This is "but a simple story," since, as the poem suggests, mutilation speaks for itself --- the injured, unjust, inarticulate body here is a performed text.

This verse, which presents itself as a song or performance piece, can be found in varying renditions in both Confederate as well as Union collections of poems and broadsides. Another variation reads:

"The Disabeled [sic] Soldier," by Alexander Shelle, from Brown University's Hay Broadsides

Stranger, when the fight was fiercest,
   When my comrades around me fell,
I was wounded in the trenches,
   By the bursting of a shell.
Hundreds died all crushed and mangled
   Some in agony of pain,
Bit the very earth beneath them,
   Soaked with life-blood of the slain.
It was not my fate to perish
   In this storm of iron hail,
But a mutilated soldier,
   I have come to tell the tale;
That ten thousand are repeating
   Through our peaceful land to-day,
How they fought and how they suffered,
   In the din of deadly fray.
Mine is but a simple story,
   And I need not make it long,
Only in your joy and plenty ---
   Buy a copy of my song.
'Twas your foe and mine, whose missile
   Made a Cripple of the strong,
Stranger, pardon if I ask you
   Buy a One-Legged-Soldier's Song.
Here "ten thousand are repeating" this tale of mutilation. It is as if there is an entire army of mutilated veterans repeating the same story, creating a unified text of the war, read together, as one vast injured body.

Another empty sleeve poem, "The Empty Sleeve," by David Gingry, Jr., from Brown University's Hay Broadsides, reads in part:

I want no pity, ask no alms;
   Give me some work for this one hand,
The other 'neath the Southern palms,
   Is rotting in the shifting sands.

***

I could not rest in idle ease,
   And read of fiery deeds each day;

***

When th' keen saw rasped through the bone,
   From my pale lips there burst a cry;
'Twas not the stinging pain alone
   That caused that moan of agony;
But thoughts of home smote my brain ---

The imagined injured soldier here could not merely read of the war in daily installments. He needed to be there, to offer his body to the nation. In return, the story of his missing body parts, and the graphic tale of their being sawed off, are now made into text to be read, a poem that the nation reads together.

Playing off the interconnectedness of the words injured and unjust, and the resulting intermingling of bodily imagery and textual imagery, we can see how these poems textualize the wounded, injured, or unjustified and textually uneven body. The unbounded, strange boundaries, and the unbound, unwrapped body in the empty sleeve poems are unreadable, they are not properly bound. These broken, injured bodies are off center, just as unjustified text is. The injured body is portrayed as uncontainable in these poetic containers. The broken body is represented in very unbroken, regular meter, the seamless container of text that these sentimental poems are. The empty sleeves represent what is not there, what can no longer be articulated, yet which is coached into articulacy in these poems.

While the empty sleeve poems write the body as text, marking the body as articulate (both in the sense of being obviously (dis)jointed, and in the sense of inspiring meaningfully arranged words), there are also a number of poems that relay the story of a soldier's fall, where a poem or last letter is eventually found on the wounded or dying soldier's body, offering another example of this era's persistent intermingling of textual and bodily wounding. As one of many examples, this epigraph to the Tri-Weekly Telegraph's version of "All Quiet Along the Potomac Tonight," 11 August 1862, reads: "The following poetical gem we copy from a Western paper. The original was found in the pocket of a volunteer who died in camp on the Potomac." Additionally, the epigraph of "My Order," by Gordon M'Cabe, in The Southern Poems of the War reads, "Said to have been found in the pocket of a wounded soldier, in hospital." (The sentiment "Said to have been found" here also points to this poetry's complex layering of news and fiction.)
The empty sleeve poems make the injured body a text to be read, prodding readers to read these unjustified, uneven bodies, and poems, in a certain way. The poems come across as primers on how to read injured bodies, where empty sleeves are unjustified lines of text and the speaker in the poem acts as editor. Indeed, many of the empty sleeve poems have a blazon-like structure to them, where the unjustified, uneven soldier's body is catalogued and imagined as a text to be read, and even taught, and many empty sleeve poems set out to teach us, and the gaping passers-by within the poem, how to read these injured and uneven war bodies and their gaping sleeves.

The poems list individual, missing body parts, calling to mind the blazon as well as Cathy Caruth's insight that "...we could say that while the force of enumeration mutilates the body as a whole, it at the same time establishes, in this disarticulation of limbs, or naming of parts, the very specificity of a human, as opposed to puppet, body." (88)

The poems make the injured body a text to be read, as well as make the empty sleeve itself a text to be read, coaching us on how to read and interpret what is now missing and unseen, what is erased or illegible. The empty sleeve poems are about telling bodies, as summed up in this line from "The Empty Sleeve" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper: "It tells in a silent tone to all." This lack, this missing limb (which itself calls to mind the idea of a (sentimental) bond, where a bond is a stand-in for what is not there), speaks for itself, it tells a tale to all who see it, to all who witness it. This missing body part presents the body as text, it speaks the body. Here an emptiness or lack is made articulate, is made to tell tales, to create text. What is missing and disjointed or inarticulate becomes, according to the poems, poignant articulacy, telling a jointed tale in even metrical feet of disjointed bodily wounding and mutilation.

Joining and disjoining, joints and disjointedness here call to mind the notion of bonds and connections that are key to this era's sentimental ideals. Wounding and text-making offer a complex gloss on sentimentality in the empty sleeve poems of the war. The line "[i]t tells in a silent tone to all" is also indicative of how this poetry figures war wounds as sentimental, textual bonds, bringing together in pity ("to all") a nation of sentimental readers. In these poems, if texts are bodies and bodies are texts, then the poems' stories are realized, they are made real, made flesh, made into a corporeal text.

This poem goes on to elaborate on this telling body and its marker, the empty sleeve: "By the moon's pale light, to a gazing throng,/Let me tell one tale, let me sing one song;/'Tis a tale devoid of aim or plan,/Tis a simple song of a one-armed man./Till this very hour I could ne'er believe/What a tell-tale thing was an empty sleeve ---/What a weird, queer thing is an empty sleeve." The missing arm is a telling text, and the lopped, unjustified body is a text that can tell us a tale. The entire poem reads,

"The Empty Sleeve," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 30 May 1863

By the moon's pale light, to a gazing throng
Let me tell one tale, let me sing one song;
'Tis a tale devoid of aim or plan,
'Tis a simple song of a one-armed man.
Till this very hour I could ne'er believe
What a tell-tale thing was an empty sleeve,
What a weird, queer thing is an empty sleeve.
It tells in a silent tone, to all,
Of a country's need, and a country's call,
Of a kiss and a tear for a child and wife,
And a hurried march for a nation's life;
Till this very hour who could e'er believe
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve,
What a weird, queer thing is an empty sleeve?
It tells of a battle-field of gore ---
Of the sabre's clash --- of the cannon's roar ---
Of the deadly charge --- of the bugle's note ---
Of the gurgling sound in a foeman's throat ---
Of the whizzing grape --- of the fiery shell ---
Of a scene that mimics the scenes of hell.
Till this very hour would you e'er believe
What a weird, queer thing is an empty sleeve?
Though it points to myriad wounds and scars,
Yet it tells that a flag, with the stripes and stars,
In God's own chosen time will take
Each place of the rag with the rattlesnake;
And it points to a time when that flag shall wave
O'er land where there breathes no cowering slave,
To the top of the skies let us all then heave
One proud huzza for the empty sleeve ---
For the one-armed man with the empty sleeve!

This popular poem, which was published with only slight variations in many periodicals, both Union and Confederate, throughout the duration of the war and after (the sheer popularity and repeatability of this poem during the war points to the many ways this war was endlessly textualized), begins with a sense of show, of performance, where the narrator tells a tale and sings a song outside, to a gazing throng. This tale that is performed publicly is about a one-armed man --- a wounded, injured body. The injured body and missing arm synecdochically become an empty sleeve, which in turn is a "tell-tale thing" --- a song or tale, in fact, a text.

The empty sleeve itself becomes a text, one that can be told and read, detailing this war's bodily sacrifices and injuries. The empty sleeve, according to the poem, is both inexplicable ("a weird, queer thing") as well as entirely explicable and readable ("a tell-tale thing"). It becomes both a sign of every horror of war, as well as an entirely inscrutable, unprecedented text that requires a poet, or tale-teller, to explicate it. In the empty sleeve poem here, the empty sleeve "tells a tale," it "points to myriad wounds and scars," suggesting an emptiness that represents wounding, an emptiness that tells a tale of bodily injury, that points to an injured, inarticulate, disjointed body that can be read, that can be construed as articulate, can be made into text. A missing body part and its sign --- the empty sleeve --- are imagined as a book, a narrative, a text, indeed a fiction, a tale. In describing it as a tale, the poem writes an element of falsity, of make-believe onto this phantom limb that is "telling tales," that is in essence lying, fabricating, making fiction.
In these poems, the empty sleeve represents what is truncated, missing, phantom, and edited out, written out, written over.

Another version of this poem was published as:

"Song. The Empty Sleeve. Written by a one-armed soldier, of the 147th Pa. Vols," from Brown University's Hay Broadsides

By the moon's pale light, to a gazing throng,
Let me tell one tale --- let me sing one song.
'Tis a tale devoid of an aim or plan;
'Tis the simple song of a one-armed man.
Till this very hour would you e'er believe
What a queer, weird thing is an empty sleeve?
It tells, in a silent way to all,
Of a country's need, and a country's call;
Of a kiss and a prayer for a child and wife,
And a hurried march for a nation's life.
Till this very hour would you e'er believe
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve?
It tells of a battle-field of gore;
Of the sabre's clash and the cannon's roar;
Of the whizzing shot and the screaming shell,
And a scene that mimics the scenes of hell.
Till this very hour would you e'er believe
What a horrible thing is an empty sleeve?
It tells of a rush at a leader's call,
To a scene where death held carnival;
Of a furious charge at the bugle's note,
And a gurgling sound in a foeman's throat.
Till this very hour would you e'er believe
What a terrible thing is an empty sleeve?
It tells of a thousand nameless graves,
Where slumber a thousand loyal braves;
Of a widow's woe and an orphan's prayer,
And a mother's tear for a "vacant chair."
Till this very hour would you e'er believe
What a mournful thing is an empty sleeve?
Though it points to a myriad seams and scars,
Yet it tells that a flag, with the stripes and stars,
In God's own chosen time, shall wave
O'er a land where droops no cowering slave.
Till this very hour would you e'er believe
What a hopeful thing is an empty sleeve?

And another example in this genre of empty sleeve poems is "The Empty Sleeve," by Dr. G. W. Bagby, from The Southern Illustrated News, 13 December 1862:
Tom, old fellow, I grieve to see
The sleeve hanging loose at your side;
The arm you lost was worth to me
Every Yankee that ever died.
But you don't mind it at all,
You swear you've a beautiful stump,
And laugh at that damnable ball ---
Tom, I knew you were always a trump.
A good right arm, a nervy hand,
A wrist as strong as a sapling oak,
Buried deep in the Malvern sand ---
To laugh at that is a sorry joke.
Never again your iron grip
Shall I feel in my shrinking palm ---
Tom, Tom, I see your trembling lip,
How on earth can I be calm?
Well! the arm is gone, it is true;
But the one that is nearest the heart
Is left --- and that's as good as two;
Tom, old fellow, what makes you start?
Why, man, she thinks that empty sleeve
A badge of honor; so do I,
And all of us: --- I do believe
The fellow is going to cry!
"She deserves a perfect man," you say;
"You not worth her in your prime?"
Tom! the arm that has turn'd to clay
Your whole body has made sublime;
For you have placed in the Malvern earth
The proof and pledge of a noble life ---
And the rest, henceforward of higher worth,
Will be dearer than all to your wife.
I see the people in the street
Look at your sleeve with kindling eyes;
And you know, Tom, there's naught so sweet
As homage shown in mute surmise.
Bravely your arm in battle strove,
Freely, for Freedom's sake, you gave it;
It has perished --- but a nation's love
In proud remembrance will save it.
Go to your sweetheart, then, forthwith ---
You're a fool for staying so long ---
Woman's love you'll find no myth,
But a truth, living, tender, strong.
And when around her slender belt
Your left is clasped in fond embrace,
Your right will thrill, as if it felt,
In its grave, the usurper's place.
As I look through the coming years,
I see a one-armed married man;
A little woman, with smiles and tears,
Is helping as hard as she can
To put on his coat, pin his sleeve,
Tie his cravat, and cut his food;
And I say, as these fancies I weave,
"That is Tom and the woman he wooed."
The years roll on, and then I see
A wedding picture bright and fair;
I look closer, and it's plain to me
That is Tom with the silver hair.
He gives away the lovely bride,
And the guests linger, loth to leave
The house of him in whom they pride ---
"Brave old Tom with the empty sleeve."

This empty sleeve poem is a primer on how to read the "unjustified" (being here a textual image as well as a sign of injury) body; it is a blazon of sorts. Bagby's empty sleeve poem teaches the reader of the poem as well as the passers-by within the poem how to read this empty sleeve, how to read, limn, and interpret what is now missing, unseen, and otherwise illegible, unreadable, and unknowable.

This poem, and all the many empty sleeve poems published during and right after the war, is about how the empty sleeve "tells," how it can be read, making the empty sleeve legible, readable. The poems bring the missing body parts back to life in text rather than flesh; they exchange flesh for text (see also the poem "The Last Letter," below, for other body/currency/text exchanges or swaps). This poem spends time teaching passers-by within the poem's narrative how to read, how to interpret the former soldier's empty sleeve, while also teaching the soldier himself how to read and interpret his new, unjust (seemingly unfair to him, not justified or authorized) and unjustified (injured, uneven, lopped, ragged, unaligned) body, how to rewrite his story from one of injustice to one of pride and patriotism. The poem resembles a primer or mourning manual, in that it sets out to teach those in the poem as well as those reading the poem how to translate and read this, and all the other, newly war-wounded bodies.

This and the many other empty sleeve poems are sentimental, didactic poems. They are poems that teach, about bodies that teach. In the empty sleeve poems, the poem is a primer, and the wounded body in the poem is a primer as well. Both the wounded body and the written poem are meant to teach their readers. Both are presented as didactic, sentimental texts meant to teach us to read and see in a certain way, teaching us to read a situation a certain way.

Bagby's poem also points to the shame in so many of these empty sleeve poems, where the soldier in the poems does not want his sweetheart to know about or see his lopped and bruised frame. He feels injured and unjustified --- both in the sense of being
bodily uneven as well as feeling his situation is unjust, unfair, and unauthorized, not self-authored.

This shame and feeling of injustice also come up in the many empty sleeve poems that end with an advertisement, with a price tag. Many of the empty sleeve poems end with a coda connecting the poem to manhood, work, and compensation. These soldier-poets have resorted to authoring and selling the text of their wounded selves for money, both in the sense of the street performance that the poem's ending alludes to, as well as in the sheet music that the poem/song is written on and that is now for sale. Aside from selling the performance or reading of their wounded bodies and the poem/songs that write these bodies, some of the poems even detail the selling and exchange of pieces of the wounded body itself (for example, in "The Last Letter," looked at below).

The empty sleeve poems can also productively be read in terms of the phrase "remains to be seen," and the uncertainty, unsure knowledge this phrase connotes, as well as the very visceral certainty of the soldier's remains that are left behind to be "seen" (in a poem or in a photograph or illustration) or not seen (through the empty sleeves that instantiate the bodily loss) and are now merely imagined, written, or taught. These poems are about what remains to be seen, that is, what is left, what remains (the injured, unjustified body), as well as what is unknown, unsaid, unread, what still remains to be; also what is left to be seen, what remains to be seen (the empty sleeve where the fighting, patriotic, nationally called arm/body was), and what remains to be seen in the sense of the photograph, all that is left, all that is evidence, all that is now seen, an image of what has forever disappeared. The empty sleeve and the photograph in this sense fulfill the same function --- they both represent what is left behind, what remains to be seen of the patriotic body. In these senses, the multivalent phrase "remains to be seen" can also usefully be read here in terms of uncertainty or unsure knowledge; as well as the very visceral certainty of the soldier's remains that are left behind to be seen (photographs) or not seen (empty sleeves) and merely imagined, written, or taught. Parsing this phrase in light of these poems can show us much that is at work in the poems: hope, hesitancy, suspense, as well as a sense of the imperative ("to be" in "remains to be seen" sounds both imperative as well as suspenseful and full of a sense of future things) of the seeing or witnessing of the remains themselves.

Another poem that conflates text and body in interesting ways is Harper's Weekly's "A Soldier's Letter," 19 April 1862:

_Hospital, June --- ._

I write with a great deal of pain, dear girl;
I've not been able before since the fight,
And my brain is still so much in the whirl
That I can tell you but little to-night.
I'm wounded --- don't start --- 'tis not very bad,
Or at least it might be worse; so I said,
When I thought of you, "I'm sure she'll be glad
To know that I'm only wounded --- not dead."

I've lost my left arm --- there now, you know all!
A Minnie ball shattered it and I fell;  
The last that I heard was our captain's call,  
Until --- the rest is too painful to tell.  
I've had throughout the most excellent care,  
And I'm doing finely the surgeon says ---  
So well, indeed, that the prospect is fair  
For a homeward trip before many days.

But I've something else, dear Mary to say,  
And I'd say it if it cost me my life;  
I've thought of it well --- there's no other way ---  
You're released from your promise to be my wife;  
You'll think me foolish at first; then you'll think  
Of the loose, armless coat-sleeve at my side;  
And your proud and sensitive heart will shrink  
From the thought of being a cripple's bride.

'Tis a bitter struggle to give you up,  
For I've loved you more than ever of late;  
But down to its dregs I've drained the cup,  
And I'm calm, though my heart is desolate.  
I'm coming home, and of course we must meet;  
My darling, this once, one boon I implore,  
Let us still be friends, for that will be sweet,  
Since now, alas! we can be nothing more.

_Sweet Home_, June ---.

My Robert, how noble and brave you are!  
Too brave and too noble, I know, for me  
But you've too little faith in me by far,  
If you believe I want to be free.  
I'm not released from my promise --- no, no!  
'Twere never so sacred to me before;  
If you could but know how I've longed to go  
And watch by your side, you'd doubt me no more.

I read your name in the terrible list,  
But the tears froze back that sprang to my eye;  
And a tearful pain that I could not resist,  
Crushed my heart till I only longed to die.  
The blessed tears, by-and-by, came again,  
And I felt, as you in your letter said,  
A feeling of gladness 'mid all my pain,  
That Robert was only wounded --- not dead.
Oh, darling! to think you have suffered so,
And I, all these long, weary miles away;
You've needed me very often, I know,
While I could do nothing but hope and pray.
But hardest of all is the bitter thought
That you have been suffering so much for me;
Poor Robert! your manly letter has brought
A strange mixture of joy and misery.

But you're coming home to my arms and heart;
You're right --- I am proud and sensitive too;
But I'm only so when we are apart,
And now, I shall only be proud of you!
You're coming home to be happy and rest,
And I wait the moment of blissful calm
When I shall be held to a Soldier's breast
By a Patriot-Hero's one strong arm!

This is an entire poem meant to be read as two letters, calling our attention yet again to
the centrality of text in these war poems. From the opening line, "I write with a great deal
of pain, dear girl," we are witness to this poem's (and in turn much of this poetry's)
confluence of writing and pain, of text and body. The pain with which the soldier writes
is physical ("I'm wounded") as well as emotional. The line "...the rest is too painful to
tell" sets up an implicit contrast between telling and feeling, between narrative and the
(supposed) broken affectional bonds of war as well as the wounded war body.

Text and pain are repeatedly paired in this poem, as can be seen in these lines,

I read your name in the terrible list,
But the tears froze back that sprang to my eye;
And a tearful pain that I could not resist,
Crushed my heart till I only longed to die.

The soldier's sweetheart suffers "tearful pain" upon reading the soldier's name "in the
terrible list." Reading brings pain; reading, text, is incorporated and gives rise to pain.
According to the poem, both writing and reading war's text, war's letters, generate pain.
This poem calls to mind the war's "...letters that resisted and reframed war's carnage."
(Faust, This Republic of Suffering 30) Once again, in this poem text and war's wounds are
mingled.

Additionally, the poem both enjoins sacrifice, as well as making war, and its
severed bodies, into a whole, unsevered, unambiguous (sentimental) ballad, a story, a
narrative, a letter home. This poem reminds us of the boundaries and bonds that go back
and forth, from home to battle. Letters, texts, cross this boundary between home and
battle, between whole bodies and war's wounded bodies.

One of the more powerful poems in this genre is about a wounded, dying soldier
in the hospital. The poem, "The Last Letter," by Charles Lever, in Poetical-Pen Pictures
of the War, can be read as being about the mingling of text and body, where the two
become conflated in telling ways. The poem is about sending word, sending a last letter ("this present writing" --- yet again we have a popular war poem that is a piece of writing about writing), which in the poem can be read as sending dismembered body parts, where injury to the body leads to an exchange of money as well as an exchange or conflation of text --- last words, a last letter --- with a mortally injured body. The poem reads,

"The Last Letter," by Charles Lever, from *Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War*

Dear Rose, to you I send this present writing,
To let you know how this world goes with me;
Our glorious boys have done some glorious fighting,
A left arm lost, alas! has done for me.
We've great successes in our track advancing,
The cruel grape has shaken our poor homes;
We've sacked whole cities, but a spent ball glancing,
Pays me my share of booty in my bones.
From an old hospital this word I'm sending,
To leave it soon at death's call for the grave;
I send an eagle by him who does my mending,
For them I've sold the body he can't save.
I send the pieces, for I'm just now thinking
That if to-night must see me in the earth,
I can't do less for one whom love's been linking
So close to me than give her *all I'm worth*.
My poor old mother when I left her crying,
Was nearly gone and looking close to death;
I've writ a line to tell her I'm dying,
But I do hope she's taken her last breath.
For if the dear old woman is still living,
Her heart's so soft that if she hears I'm gone,
She cannot stay, and shall death be giving
To her who gave me life, now left alone.
My little Rose, there's one old friend I cherish,
You won't desert --- my good old dog I mean;
He mustn't know I'm dead --- for sure he'd perish
If he but thought of me the last he'd seen.
He's looking now to see me home returning,
At least a Corporal, if not something more;
Then guard him well, and keep the dog from learning
I died a private on this earthen floor.
It cuts me to the heart to think of dying
Far from the village, and from you, my Rose;
No chance to say good night to friends, or, sighing,
To press your hand before my eyelids close.
At home they'd soon my shattered bones be laying
Hard by the church --- a cross above my head,
There my Rose would sometimes come, and praying,
   Ask God to keep him whom she loved though dead.
Then good by, Rose, good by; and don't be weeping
   Farewell, farewell! I'll see you dear, no more;
For in the company I'll soon be keeping,
   They give no furloughs, though you beg them sore.
All's turning round --- I feel I'm just departing,
   I've got my orders and must leave you here;
Good night, good night! --- One word before starting;
   God bless you, Rose, and don't forget me, dear!

Sending word and sending money are equated in this poem, where text appears to be on a par with currency, and this currency results from the sale of the letter writer's future dead body. The poem offers a complex take on the sentimental ideal of letters home, which are meant to stand for affectional bonds between separated people. Here the letter contains pieces of currency exchanged for the now wounded, and forecast to be dead, body of the letter writer. The text sent home as a bond or link between two people contains money that represents the death and sale of one of the two people. The poem highlights what Peter Shabad calls "the loan of life...the debt of death." (14)

"The Last Letter" deals provocatively with exchange, pieces (coins (which are already a stand-in, or bond), body parts, dismemberment, blazon, separations, text, and sentimental bonds). The poem imagines a soldier sending word, sending his last letter, his last text (he ends asking for "[o]ne word," reminding us of last words, of the importance of text in death), and within the letter he will "send the pieces," meaning pieces of currency, presumably, but by the poem's own logic it seems as likely that he has enclosed pieces of his amputated body within his letter.

His war-torn body is in pieces that cannot be mended by the surgeon (who initially comes across here as a tailor), he feels sure he will die soon, and he has sold his body in exchange for money he will send to his loved one in place of coming home himself. Textuality (the last letter, which will in effect be a letter from the dead when it arrives; sending word; and the (failed) mender who also calls to mind an emender, or one who "puts right" unjustified texts) is suggestively interwoven with pieces of bodies exchanged for pieces of currency in this poem.

"The Last Letter" gestures at an interesting connection between both the surgeon -- the mender --- and the poet who "rights" an unjustified, injured body in an even, mellifluous poem. In the poem "Touch Them Tenderly" from Harper's Weekly, 4 June 1864, we read:

Bind softly the poor wounds that bled
Where the wild-flowers their odors shed,
Making the free air sweet.

Here, as elsewhere in this war poetry, to bind wounds reminds us of binding poems together, as well as binding images together in a sentimental poem about wounds and the physical gaps that war causes. The images in this stanza are about touch, affection, and
sentimental bonds, both in terms of affection as well as text. Those who most obviously perform the binding in this war are both the surgeon and the poet or editor. As Samuels notes, "It might be said that both the surgeon and poet wield instruments to cope with piles of bodies: they are linked by the implied presence of the photograph and by a crossing of national and erotic longing." (Facing America 60) and, "Both the poet and the surgeon...take the body as an instantiation or type even as such bodies have names and particularity. In creating a similar relationship to bodies, the project of photography during the Civil War appears at once extraordinarily intimate and part of mass reproduction and mass death." (60)

Making unjustified, injured bodies into texts even took the form of some of this war poetry's attempts at humor. For instance, in The Civil War in Song and Story's poem "L-E-G on My Leg," the letters that spell, or textualize, a soldier's missing leg are played upon to create another, homophonic text, an elegy:

Good leg, thou wast a faithful friend,  
And truly hast thy duty done;  
I thank thee most that to the end  
Thou didst not let this body run.  
Strange paradox! that in the fight  
Where I of thee was thus bereft,  
I lost my left leg for "the Right,"  
And yet the right's the one that's left!  
But while the sturdy stump remains,  
I may be able yet to patch it,  
For even now I've taken pains  
To make a L-E-G to match it.

The poet claims to "To make an L-E-G to match it," that is, to make another leg, another limb, while making an elegy, a poem, a text that will match the missing leg, that will stand in for or be a bond for the missing leg. The poet creates a written leg, a made thing, to replace the flesh and blood leg he has lost. This parodic poem calls attention to the made-ness, the writtenness, the artifice of both the poem itself as well as of the imagined soldier's body. (The poem "The Cripple at the Gate," from Harper's Weekly, 4 October 1862, contains the lines, "He has left a limb on the battle-plain," and, "He tells me his tale in a simple way," where we can see another instance of exchanging a limb for a tale. Though the soldier no longer has a limb, he does have a tale to tell, a text, a story in its stead, to replace the limb left on the field. The limb has been translated to text, to a tale.) "L-E-G on My Leg" is about an authored body, where the now missing leg is called into being, named, through an act of writing. The poem foregrounds assumptions about both fact and fiction, where fiction fills in for missing facts, for missing body parts.

Additionally, the poem transforms the phantom, missing body part into mere letters, phonemes. It makes the body into the barest, most abstract of text, the letter, which, as the smallest unit of signification, signifies an absence of meaning. The single letter represents a lack within language to uphold any overall meaning or metaphor, offering instead the possibility for alterior, less obvious readings. By making his missing leg into both a poem --- an elegy --- as well as a mere sequence of letters, the poem's
narrator alludes to both his leg's and words' themselves quality of both absence and presence, speaking to both the inherent lack in language to uphold any single or totalizing cohesive meaning, and the capacity of words and text to speak volumes. This parodic poem actually writes the injured, unjust body into both an endlessly meaningful as well as univocal text. (I am indebted to colleagues at the Lutecium in San Francisco for insights that led to this last paragraph.)

In his poem "Come up from the Fields, Father," Whitman tells the story of a family getting the news, however circuitously, of their soldier son's death. Among other things, this poem imagines the family at home receiving a letter, a text, with news about their soldier son. Yet the letter is not in his own hand, which they take to mean that he is grievously wounded or even dead. The poem suggests powerful connections between the body, wounds, signs of death, interpretation, and legibility:

Come up from the fields, father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door, mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves
fluttering in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and
grapes on the trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)
Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent
after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful,
and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come, father, come
at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry, mother, to the front door come right away.
Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous,
her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor
adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name
is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son,
O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black,
she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast,
cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,
At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah, now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all
its cities and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head,
very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

Grieve not so, dear mother (the just-grown
daughter speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and
dismay'd),
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will
soon be better.

Alas, poor boy, he will never be better (nor maybe
needs to be better, that brave and simple soul),
While they stand at home at the door he is
dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night
fitfully sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with
one deep longing,

O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent
from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead
son.

This line in Whitman's poem is very telling: "O this is not our son's writing, yet his name
is sign'd." Ideas of writing, interpretation, self-authoring, naming, and a replaced "hand"
encourage the reader of the poem to consider the connections between bodies and texts.
Like many other popular war poems from this era, Whitman's "Come up..." focuses on
notions of text, one aspect of which, in this poem, is the fact that the central text in the
poem, the letter, is not in the son's hand: "O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is
sign'd," and, "O a strange hand writes for our dear son." The poem makes much of this
trope of writing not in the hand of the loved one. Here the family reads between the lines,
y they are performing a kind of textual interpretation that leads them to conclusions about
war, grief, and death. The letter here, which the family eagerly reads, is in the end
deceptive in the news it conveys, as well as deceptive in the hand it is penned in. The
notion that the writing is not in their son's hand, that the letter is written secondhand, is
what disturbs the family most, calling to mind for readers of the poem ideas of the
connections between text and body. This image of not being in the loved one's "hand"
both highlights the importance of true texts in the poem, as well as reifies the idea of
being "in the hand of," reminding us of the very bodily act of writing itself, further
conflating text and body.

The image of a letter arriving "not in the hand" of a loved one occurs often in this
war poetry, just one other example being in the poem "The Empty Sleeve" from The
Magnolia Weekly, 1 April 1865, where war news is hearsay, and "a letter came" "not in
his own ... hand" to those who remained at home "in anxious loneliness." Both here and
in Whitman's "Come up from the Fields, Father," as well as in all the many empty sleeve
poems, the wounded are known by what they are not, by what they lack; what
is not there, what does not appear, what is in the gap, in the fissures, is what identifies
them.

The families at home who receive the letter that is not in their son's hand are
dreading the worst, and what prompts their dread is represented in the poems as
replacements --- other hands, other arms, others' texts. This mingling of anxieties
regarding both texts (letters home from strangers) as well as missing or replaced body
parts calls to mind the amputees in all the empty sleeve poems. These poems express a
real anxiety about replaced hands, replaced writers, replaced texts. This image of a letter
"not in the hand" of a loved soldier also seems to "write out" the wounded. The wounded
are in this way written by someone else, authored by someone else, written out, made
dead textually as well as bodily, an image that once again suggestively comingles body,
death, and text.
Chapter Four: Making Marks: Reading the Land, Reading Bodies

In this chapter I will look at the profound felt loss during and right after the war. I am interested in how the popular war poems make sense of the war --- both how they made meaning of the war, as well as how they gave it sense, how they made this a felt war --- a war where damaged and dead bodies were imagined as being held within the hearts of mourners; and a felt war both in terms of inspiring sentimental tears in readers, as well as being invested in the idea of texts, of books that can be bound and held, sensed. Many poems of the war make meaning embodied, or re-corded, that is, they rewrite the war on the heart, fictionally creating a somatic re-cord (both a register, as well as a re-heart, literally) of the war. In the process, this war's very felt, bodily loss becomes textualized in various ways, and these texts serve to preserve (within mourners' bodies or in the national soil) the now-dead soldiers. The dead and dying of the war are taken in to bodies and to the land, the grief over their loss is profoundly felt, and the memory of them is meant to be preserved forever.

Loss is imagined as being written onto dead or injured soldiers' bodies and their loved ones' bodies (poem after poem details a dead son engraved or inscribed on his mother's heart), as well as being written onto the land itself, which is repeatedly imagined, or written, as a body (namely, a mother's body that will cradle and reabsorb her dead sons' bodies).

Many of the war's poems are about the land and how the land gets wounded and textualized. And in two lines from *Our Heroes. The Patriotic Poems on Men, Women and Sayings of the Negro Race*, 1890 --- "For their history is unwritten;/It lies buried in the soil" --- we can see how the land becomes a replacement for writing. In these lines, the story of African Americans in the Civil War is unwritten, it is not known or codified textually; rather, this story lies "buried in the soil." The history of African Americans in the war, at least according to this poem, is made unverifiable by text. Rather than written lines of text, this story is naturalized ("in the soil") while also being forgotten ("buried").

We can also see this image of the naturalized and forgotten contribution of blacks during the war in Phoebe Cary's poem "The Hero of Fort Wagner," where the battle of Fort Wagner, relayed as a story for a child ("You will hear such tales of war as this,/For many a year to come.")., is offered as a way to imagine the role of blacks in the Civil War (the attack on Fort Wagner was led by the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, one of the first major American military units made up of black soldiers). The key stanzas read:

Brave men were there, for their country's sake
To spend their latest breath;
But the bravest was one who gave his life
And his body after death.
No greater words than his dying ones
Have been spoken under the sun;
Not even his, who brought the news
On the field at Ratisbon.
I was pressing up, to try if yet
Our men might take the place,
And my feet had slipped in his oozing blood
    Before I saw his face.
His face! it was black as the skies o'erhead
    With the smoke of the angry guns;
And a gash in his bosom showed the work
    Of our country's traitor sons.
Your pardon, my poor boy! I said,
    I did not see you here;
But I will not hurt you as I pass;
    I'll have a care; no fear!
He smiled; he had only strength to say
    These words, and that was all:
"I'm done gone, Massa; step on me;
    And you can scale the wall!"

Here the smiling, dying black soldier gives his life in battle, and he also, more graphically, then gives his dead body to be used as a stepping stone for the white soldier's triumphant escape from battle death. The black soldier's dead body becomes naturalized (it becomes something underfoot, something akin to the ground, and its oozing blood can unwittingly be slipped in), and his part in this war story (this tale told to a child) is surmounted and left behind. The white soldier survives because he is invited to step on and over the dead body of the black soldier. The naturalized and left-behind (yet still celebrated via the text of the poem) dead black body enables the white soldier's triumph.

In many popular war poems, dead white bodies are absorbed by and cradled in the land, and people are often depicted as being called from the field, where the farm, the battlefield, and the field of poetry are conflated, particularly in Walt Whitman's "Come up from the Fields, Father." (The conflation of war death and land can also be seen in war photographer Alexander Gardner's photo title, "Incidents of War: A Harvest of Death.")

In addition to being written onto the land, images of text being written onto the suffering body appear again and again; just one example is the poem "Woman --- 1862," by Harriet M'Ewen Kimball, from the Anti-Slavery Standard, reprinted from the Independent, where we see this line: "And the Divine One, who alone can clearly read the human./Traces the hero's autograph through tear-blots of the woman." This embodied loss and profound grief is inscribed on the land with blood-soaked soldiers' feet, as well as by the bodies written as strewn across the land that we are then trained to read in these poems.

The Southern Illustrated News's poem "A Picture," 29 November 1862, paints a particularly vivid picture of war's grief being written onto the land, where blood-soaked feet make tracks to be read on the contested land, which are then conflated with lines of text telling the story in a newspaper; this story of war is marked, re-corded, and read on paper as well as on the motherland itself:

He glanceth at the daily sheet—
The record of the wondrous story,
Writ o’er our plains by bleeding feet,
Of hero youths and patriots hoary.
"The record of the wondrous story" here speaks also to a point Faust makes that "...records that preserved names and identities involved a dramatically new understanding of the relationship of the citizen and the state." (This Republic of Suffering 268) These records of the dead, the texts of the dead, were a multivalent metaphor in the war poetry, and they were also a way the state had of keeping an accounting of, of recording and textualizing, war's dead bodies in new and more efficient ways.

In the above stanza, the daily paper (a daily "record" or text of the "wondrous story" of war) replicates a story of war that was written on the land, a naturalized story penned in blood by heroes' wounded bodies. This naturalized story gets transcribed to paper, to the "daily sheet," marking it as a story or text that is doubly told: It is told in the text of newsprint, as well as on the pages of the land. A similar image appears in "To the Colored Volunteer," from The Anglo-African: "Go register in blood again/Your claim to human right," where bodies write in blood, during battle, and this writing is a registering, a recording. In this case the text of blood written by the war-injured body marks a claim to freedom, a claim to be free of the bonds (a loaded term in these sentimental poems) of slavery.

In "The Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth," from The Anglo-African, 13 October 1863, Frances Harper imagines each dying black soldier's bleeding heart as a "balm/To heal the wounded nation's life." Here the blood of dying black bodies --- their hearts, or (re)cords --- is figured as a healing balm, thereby naturalizing as well as medicalizing these bodies. According to the poem, the dying hearts' blood-as-balm will drench the soil, the land of the nation, and, in future ages, the story, or history, of these dead black men will be lifted and learned from the soil. The text or history of this battle and these black soldiers will be culled from the blood-drenched soil:

And from the soil drenched with their blood,
   The fairest flowers of peace shall bloom;
   And history cull rich laurels there,
   To deck each martyr'd hero's tomb

The entire poem reads:

Where storms of death were sweeping,
   Wildly through the darkened sky,
Stood the bold but fated column,
   Brave to do, to dare, to die.

With cheeks that knew no blanching,
   And brows that would not pale;
Where the bloody rain fell thickest,
   Mingled with the fiery hail.

Bearers of a high commission
   To break each brother's chain;
With hearts aglow for freedom,
    They bore the toll and pain.

And onward pressed though shot and shell
    Swept fiercely round their path;
While batteries hissed with tongues of flame,
    And bayonet flashed with wrath.

Oh! not in vain those heroes fell,
    Amid those hours of fearful strife;
Each dying heart poured out a balm
    To heal the wounded nation's life.

And from the soil drenched with their blood,
    The fairest flowers of peace shall bloom;
And history cull rich laurels there,
    To deck each martyred hero's tomb.

And ages yet uncrossed with life,
    As sacred urns, do hold each mound
Where sleep the loyal true, and brave
    In freedom's consecrated ground.

In an interesting conflation of death, the land, and the page, war-poem anthologizers Margaret Canby and Sallie Brock equate poems with offerings from the grave, in their anthology titles and in their prefaces. Flowers, products of the land, are poems in Canby's title, *Flowers from the Battle-Field, and Other Poems*, and the dead are imagined as poems in Brock's preface, where she announces that she aims, with her anthology, to "gather up the remains of the Confederate Dead, from the numberless battle-fields over which they were scattered, and place them where the rude ploughshare may not upturn their bleaching bones," that is, in an anthology. (Max Cavitch, in his book *American Elegy: The Poetry of Mourning from the Puritans to Whitman*, points to the interesting image of a plowshare here inscribing the earth with lines of verse, a word that itself calls to mind a turning, like a plowshare.) C. C. Hassler's war-poem anthology title, *Bullets and Blossoms: The Crimson Fields of 1861-65, Covered by the Sweet Blossoms of Memory in 1899*, gestures at how memories of the dead, poems of the dead, are written over the bloody fields, where we readers are then imagined as reading the dead.

The field and the page are conflated over and over again in these poems, where writing, reading, and death repeatedly inflect each other. In the poem "Bethel," from the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1 September 1862, the page is imagined as a crafted text, and the field a natural text:

Where he fell shall be sunshine as bright as his name,
And the grass where he slept shall be green as his fame;
For the gold of the Pen and the steel of the Sword
Write his deeds --- in his blood --- on the land he adored, ---

The pen and the sword are both imagined as writing the name of the dead soldier in his blood on the land he died on defending. The land is text here just as much as a page. And the soldier's blood, part of his body, is imagined as the ink that will inscribe the land as a page, a text, that will record and register his patriotic deeds.

In "The Mothers of 1862," by Caroline A. Mason, from New York Illustrated News, 23 May 1863, we read:

Take him, my country! he is true
And brave and good; his deeds shall tell
More than my foolish words --- 'tis well!
God's love be with the lad and you.

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And if --- God help me --- if, instead
They flash this word from some red field:
"His brave, sweet soul that would not yield;
Leaped upward, and they wrote him 'dead'"

I'll turn my white face to the wall,
And bear my grief as best I may,
For Roger's sake, and only say,
"He knoweth best who knoweth all."

In this poem a mother imagines her soldier son being written as dead, where the news of him being dead is imagined as a purely textual experience. When "They flash this word from some red field....they wrote him 'dead,'" it is as if the field wrote the dead soldier, as if the field itself flashed the word. Field and page are again conflated, and it is as if the land, the battle-field, writes the dead, textualizing both the field as well as the dead soldier. In these war poems, the dead are inscribed onto and by the land/country, onto headstones, and onto the living hearts, the cords, of those left behind, those who have been recorded upon.

In addition to writing the dead on the land, the images that these poets use to present war's bodies are very concerned with texts and texts' ways of binding or organizing meaning. In much of the literature of the war, bodies are made into text, and, equally, texts are made to have properties of a body, as in just one example, Harper's Weekly's "Reunion," 17 June 1865 (from the London Spectator), where "The bloody page is turned" when the war is over and the poet is imagining ways of creating peace. The war is a page, a bloodied, textual thing.

In the preface to her 1869 anthology of Confederate war poems, The Southern Amaranth, Sallie Brock writes, "The design of this work was conceived in an individual desire to offer a testimonial of gratitude to the memories of the brave men who perished in the late ineffectual effort for Southern Independence; as well as in a wish to render to my Southern sisters some assistance in gathering up the remains of the Confederate Dead,
from the numberless battle-fields over which they were scattered, and placing them where the rude ploughshare may not upturn their bleaching bones, and where sorrowing friends may at least drop a tear, and lay a flower upon the grass-covered hillocks that mark their resting-places" (italics in original).

For Brock, and for many of these poets, as evidenced in their poems, reading is a bodily, sensed mourning, and mourning the dead becomes a very verbal, literary, textual act. In Brock's metaphor, poems are in effect scattered dead bodies or remains, and the anthology of poems is a graveyard, a place to collect these remains and mourn, or read, them. Brock's preface is fascinating in the way she conflates the remains of soldiers' bodies with the poems that remain behind to commemorate them. According to her preface, reading these poems is reading dead bodies, and gathering or recording these poems in an anthology will help to mourn and honor this war's dead bodies. Reading the poems is honoring the dead, as they are a testament to the dead bodies, the remains; and placing the poems in an anthology is equated with giving the remains a proper burial. Brock blurs the distinction between text and bodies, and between reading and mourning, just as many of the poems she and others collect do.

Though the images I find in so many of these war poems of making the suffering or wounded body a text are striking and seemingly unique to this war, cataloguing the suffering body was not uncommon in this era's sentimental poetry. Indeed, sentimental poems written before the Civil War use many tropes that the Civil War poems use as well. For example, as Mark Schantz writes, even prewar poems were "[i]ngeniously playing with the idea that enduring fame is the equivalent of the embalming of memory...." (118) Additionally, Fahs explains how individual, bodily suffering, both pre and postwar, was sentimentalized and made to make sense by the country:

A vast antebellum popular literature shared Stowe's concern with the Christian-influenced themes of sacrifice, suffering, and redemption --- especially through the vehicle of the suffering body. With the coming of war, the wounded, dying, and dead bodies of soldiers became the vehicle for a new sentimentalism that fused patriotism and Christianity. Sentimentalism provided a way of making sense of the bodily sacrifices of soldiers within an explicitly Christian framework. It also allowed wartime writers to cope with a central problem posed by the war: the shocking anonymity of suffering and death undergone by ordinary soldiers far from home. This was an aspect of war that many Americans found unbearable: they simply could not accept that soldiers' suffering and death would go unsung and unmourned. (95--96)

Finding meaning in war's bodies, and then writing those bodies, translating them to text, was a huge part of this popular war literature. Making meaning through this war's suffering bodies is something that Fahs notes as well: "This was not a nationalism located

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12 As Mary Loeffelholz reminds us in her book From School to Salon: Reading Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry, this was not a new idea in the Civil War. In a prewar context, the poet Lucretia Davidson was figuratively made into a book after her death, and her poems were viewed as her remains, her dead body.
in the subordination of the individual to the demands of the Union or Confederacy, as early in the war; rather, this was a tender, individualized nationalism that located the very essence of the nation's meaning in the individual bodies of wounded soldiers," (111--112) and, "Such a task required a form of imaginative sympathy that deepened the war's meanings for observers, as they found in the bodies of wounded and dying soldiers a new and revelatory way of comprehending country." (119)

I would like to take Fahs's claims farther and look at the ways that suffering bodies were textualized in an effort to make and record meaning. Fahs gestures toward this textual meaning making when she writes,

If, as Elaine Scarry has argued, the wounding and destruction of bodies is a central goal of war, it is also central to claims of participation in war. Certainly during the Civil War many writers claimed that wounds and their accompanying suffering provided a direct connection to the higher meanings of the war, whether political or religious. The poem "Our Wounded," for instance, published in the Continental Monthly in October 1862, invoked the "sublimity of suffering":

Wounded! O Sweet-lipped word! for on the page
Of this strange history, all these scars shall be
The hieroglyphics of a valiant age,
Deep-writ in freedom's blood-red mystery.

For men, it was through wounds, and with blood as "ink," that the history of the war would be written. A feminized war literature reversed this formula: it was through writing about the war that women's own wartime wounds could be claimed. (136--137)

I will take Fahs's observations about the connections between war wounds and writing and think through in more detail what the implications for both war and meaning making are when war's suffering bodies and the suffering national body of land are repeatedly made into or imagined to be text.

There is a persistent intermingling of text and body in these war poems. In the many empty sleeve poems, the poems depict body as text. In addition to the body being imagined as text, there are many instances of text mingling with the body. I would like to look at some of the many poems where a poem or last letter is found on a wounded body, or where a soldier's dead body is buried with an unopened letter put upon the chest, imagining again and again the curious conflation of the war's dead, burial and the earth, and text. These poems imagine the remains of war's bodies intermingled, buried with, and identified or called out by textual remains, fragments of text. In the many poems where a poem or last letter is found in the pocket of a wounded or dead soldier, the body carries last words, the body in a sense becomes the last words, becomes the last text --- the dead become an anthology, in a sense; they become a buried book that holds the various letters written by themselves or others --- and we as readers are meant to read the letter or poem coming from the dead as the dead themselves. The poem "My Order" in The Southern
Poems of the War, as well as the news story "Incident of War" in Frank Moore's The Civil War in Song and Story, both tell of what purport to be real-life examples of times during battle when a book, a text, in the soldier's breast pocket, over his heart, deflects a deadly bullet.

These war poems are depicted as "from the heart," as effusive outpourings that even death cannot halt, promoting the notion that the poems are natural, from the land or the body, unmediated; they are outpourings of expression, from the heart, shot through along with the heart. The idea of text, of the book, is part of the way this war's bodies and land themselves were imagined. As this epigraph to the Tri-Weekly Telegraph's version of the very popular war poem "All Quiet Along the Potomac Tonight," 11 August 1862, imagines it, "The following poetical gem we copy from a Western paper. The original was found in the pocket of a volunteer who died in camp on the Potomac." Whether strictly factual or not, we see this sentiment in countless poems, where the poet seeks to ground his poem, to give it the legitimacy of fact (calling attention to this poetry's complicated mingling of news, fiction, and sentimentality), by claiming that it was found with or even buried with the dead, thereby complicating the boundaries between war's texts and war's dead bodies, between reading and death. What might it mean to repeatedly imagine and depict this text/body/wounding?

In "Left on the Battle-Field," by Howard Glyndon, in Harper's Weekly, 29 August 1863, we read of a soldier's letter left unread after he has died:

Oh, my darling! my darling! never to feel
   Your hand going over my hair!
Never to lie in your arms again, ---
   Never to know where you are!
Oh, the weary miles that stretch between
   My feet and the battle-ground,
Where all that is left of my dearest love
   Lies under some yellow mound!

It is but little I might have done
   To lighten your parting pain;
But 't is bitter to think that you died alone,
   Out in the dark and rain!
Oh, my hero love! --- to have kissed the pain
   And the mist from your fading eyes!
To have saved one only passionate look
   To sweeten these memories!

And thinking of all, I am strangely stunned,
   And cannot believe you dead.
You loved me, dear! And I loved you, dear!
   And your letter lies there unread!
You are not dead! You are not dead!
   God never could will it so ---
To craze my brain and break my heart ---
And shatter my life --- I know!

Dead! dead! and never a word,
Never a look for me!
Dead! dead! and our marriage-day
Never on earth to be!
I am left alone, and the world is changed,
So dress me in bridal white,
And lay me away in some quiet place
Out of the hateful light.

The mourning sweetheart here cannot believe that her soldier is dead. There is no proof that she is willing to believe. The "letter lies there unread!/You are not dead! You are not dead!" The letter being unread brings a certain unreality to the idea of death. The soldier's words, his letter, his text, are not read, have yet to be read, therefore he must still in some sense live on, he cannot be dead to those he loves. The connection, the bond of the text, the letter, lies unopened and unread, and is therefore "proof" that the soldier is still out there somewhere waiting, like his letter, to be read. The poem goes on with, "Dead! dead! and never a word," further connecting one's words, one's text, with one's life. There is simply no chance, within the logic of the poem's narrator and her grief, for her beloved soldier to be dead if the letter is left unread, if there were no last words. We see again the vivid connection in this war poetry between one's dead body and one's words or text.

Further confounding and conflating the difference between body and text, in Harper's Weekly's "To My Soldier," 3 January 1863, a letter, a text, from a soldier is sent from the heart, seemingly almost pulled from the body, "warm from my bosom," and the soldier claims to be "sending my heart through the distance to you," binding the gap of distance via a letter, a text, something to hold and read, in place of holding the actual body with an actual warm heart. Here the letter and the warm heart are seen as the same thing, marking the body as text, the text as body:

Warm from my bosom I send you this,
Deep in my heart these thoughts were nursed,
And my lips have lovingly left a kiss
On the words that will meet your dear eyes first.

God and our Country have claimed you from me,
I mourn for your absence, but will not repine;
For, wherever your gallant step may be,
I know that your brave, true heart is mine.

Softly I whisper your name as I kneel,
Praying, "God love you! God shield you from harms!
Sickness or wounds may His tender hand heal;
Soon may He give you back safe to my arms!"

Darling, I love you! By night and by day
Sending my heart through the distance to you,
For our Country, her Flag, and My Soldier I pray—
I love you, my darling! May God love you too!

Two persistent images in these poems are the re-cord (or re-heart) of the dead, and the engraved heart. Both these images imagine an interesting intersection between war's bodies and war's texts. The image of the engraved heart in sentimental poetry was common even in poems not about the war, just one example being Harper's Weekly's "What Might Have Been," 26 March 1864:

Upon thy banks once more I sit,
Oh! river of my happy days,
Whose memories on my heart are writ
In lines which time can not erase

I would like to note how the war inflects this sentimental poetic device. The popular war poetry makes much of the injured war body, and this imagined injured body very often had its fatal war injury inflicted on the heart. That the heart, or cord, should also be the site of writing, or a re-cord, is all the more striking then. The war takes this sentimental trope of writing on the heart to keep something alive, engraving the heart to make it a grave, and confuses it with the injured or dead hearts on the battlefield, thereby turning this common sentimental image of memory and timelessness into one of war, injury, and text.

Many of these war poems imagine ways of honoring or recording the dead bodies of the fallen soldiers as poetic outpouring, promoting the idea that these poems are natural, from the land, an unmediated outpouring. The poems are outpourings of expression, close to the heart, shot through with the heart, and known by heart. These poems play on notions of a record of the dead as a re-cording, or a re-heart, taking the dead soldier's body and memorializing it by textualizing it, writing a record or story, where that story is then written or engraved onto the mourner's own body as a record, a new heart, by heart. One is reminded, especially for all the republished, popular poems, of how these poems, these re-cords, were gotten by heart. The poems are not only written within the body, they seem to get into one's body, becoming one's very breath as the poem or song is said, sung, or read, throughout the warring nation.

The war that these poems present is truly a felt war, as can be discerned from the many times we read of images of the heart within this record of poems. These poems also call attention to how they make war bodies into texts by often noting that this record, this poem that will be learned by heart, is indeed all that is left of the soldier. Many poems also imagine dead soldiers' mothers engraving their own hearts --- imaginatively writing on their own hearts to textualize the dead and make of their own bodies an inscribed grave. According to these poems, all that is left, all that remains, of these soldiers is a text, a name and a story, that has been carved onto the hearts of mourners, those who remain. Many poems also depict a dead soldier who can be identified only by reading the letter (to a mother or sweetheart) that is folded up and tucked close to his heart (and often the letter is shot through and bloodied, as the soldier has died of a wound to the heart, and
his last trace, last text, is wounded along with his body). Death, loss, and memory are embodied and textualized, written onto and into the body and its engraven hearts.

In so many of these poems, dead bodies become embodied texts. Bodies are scored, are written on, as in this line from "The Drummer of Company C," by J. W. Watson, from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 26 July 1862, where we read of a heart that has been scored and recorded on: "That ugly minie has scored his breast...." Bodies, particularly hearts, are written upon, they serve as re-cords, texts on the heart. Bodies keep a score or tally, a record. In a poem attributed to Sallie E. Ballard entitled "To My Soldier Brother" in the anthology War Poetry of the South, we read these lines: "And though thy name's/Unknown to fame's,"Tis graven on my heart, my boy." As the poem "Dead!" 1 December 1863, in the Continental Monthly puts it, "There are graves in the heart of all," and in "There Is No Sepulchre" from Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War we see another variation on this image:

There is no sepulchre for those who perish
Before the cannon's mouth that speaks for Wrong;
Their names are embalmed in hearts that cherish
Them with devotion infinite and strong.

Popular Civil War poetry makes much of this embodied, engraved grief. Though the image of a grave in the heart of mourners, or an engraven heart, appeared in poetry before the Civil War (for example, this line from the prewar poem "Grief Is Not Told by Words" itself an interesting title, given how many words in the poem are devoted to telling about grief) in Harper's Weekly, 20 October 1860, is one of many from before the war that indicates this was a fairly typical sentimental image: "But this grave lies in his heart."), this striking image takes on added valence because of the war and its concerns with death, engravings, and texts. Bodies hold the texts of dead soldiers in these poems, and mourners' hearts are scored, engraved, and textualized repeatedly. As we read in Harper's New Monthly Magazine's "The Prisoner of War," February 1862: "How can he be a prisoner there when I have him here in my heart?/Closer I hold his image than any in the South hold him;/It is wrapped and corded with fibers that never, never will part." The dead soldier is wrapped and corded in the mourner's heart, calling to mind the bonds of sentimentality, as well as the re-record or re-heart of this war's body/text conflations.

There are many images of mourners' hearts being scored, being written on and made into text, made into re-records of the dead. For instance, in "To a Mourning Mother," by Park Benjamin, from Frank Leslie's Illustrated News, 25 July 1863, we read:

'Twas for her he bled and died
On that field of fame ---
In her heart, as in thy heart,
Graven is his name.

The dead soldier's name is graven on mourners' hearts, both ours as readers, as well as his loved ones' hearts. We are made to think of the engraved heart as a grave itself, a place (in addition to the scored and scarred land) for burial. In addition to a grave, we are also of course meant to imagine a bodily engraving, a kind of writing on or in the body of
those who read and those who mourn. An engraving is a type of text, a type of writing, but it is also a kind of cutting or wounding. This war poem, along with others like it, suggestively intimates that writing, injury, and mourning are intimately bound.

We read of this graven, scored heart again and again in these poems. For example, in "To My Soldier Brother," by Sallie E. Ballard, from War Poetry of the South, we read how this particular war inflects what is a known sentimental trope:

And though thy name's
Unknown to fame's,
'Tis graven on my heart, dear boy.

In these lines, dead names (in effect, a text of the dead, the dead as text) are in a grave (buried) as well as engraven (written on, buried in text). The poem "At Gettysburg," by Frank Cowan, from Brown University's Hay Broadsides, also images forth a written, textualized heart, one that contains the text of a soldier's life story, written in blood. The poem presents an image of what might be written on a mourner's heart in blood, a writing that will keep a trace of the mourned in another's heart. We read of an inscribed body, of grief writ small upon the heart --- a history, a re-cord, a "re-heart":

O soldier of the country of my birth!
All would I give that I have gained with in
The worlds of wonder of the New and Old,
Had I thy history within my heart!
That I might thrill as I have never yet,
While I read what was written there in blood;

In "The Patriot's Sleep," from Harper's Weekly, 18 October 1862, we read again of writing, tracing, on the body, where the body is imagined as a text, as a re-cord:

"See!" one said, "here's a mark upon my brow
That cowards never wear;
I have but left the battle-field just now ---
A bullet hit me there!"
The other looked up smiling in my face,
His rigid lips apart;
And spoke no word, but motioned me to trace
His wound above his heart.

And in the poem "To a Mourning Mother," by Park Benjamin, from Frank Leslie's Illustrated News, 25 July 1863, a name is engraved on the earth as well as on the heart. In the poem "Dying in the Hospital," from the Continental Monthly, we read of images of bonds, a last letter, and marked, written hearts:

'Twas for her he bled and died
On that field of fame ---
In her heart, as in thy heart,
Graven is his name.

Many poems picture a loved one who remains to mourn the dead soldier by speaking of him from the heart (a re-cord), where the dead soldier's story is buried and engraved. These poems describe a record-keeping where soldiers' names and fame, or story/text, are buried within the bodies of those who remain behind to read these stories, who remain to keep and learn these poems by heart in order to keep the memory of the dead alive.

The war dead are written and preserved (an image that looks ahead to embalming in this dissertation's conclusion) in bodies and in the body, or soil, of the country. Dead soldiers' bodies are written onto and into the bodies of mourners who are left behind, as well as the land left behind. The dead will be remembered (it was hoped) because they have been translated to text, to words, which are then permanently etched or scored onto hearts and land.
Conclusion: Bound to Live
Remains, Recollection, Rereading, and Reunion

The last words of the war poem "The Last Letter," by Charles Lever, in *Poetical Pen Pictures of the War*, are "...and don't forget me, dear!", reminding us of the urgent, sorrowful plaint of so many of these poems, where a letter or poem is imagined as all that will be left to remember the dead soldiers by. The war poem anthologists worked from a similar sentiment --- again and again the war poem anthology prefaces offer their collections of verse as the last words on the war. The anthology editors make clear that their collections of poems are presented as a replacement --- a bond or stand-in --- for the dead, as a way to re-collect and remember the many war dead.

The imperative "...and don't forget me, dear!" points to an urgent concern in this war, which is a larger human concern. As Peter Shabad notes in a twenty-first-century context, "The impetus behind mourning, creativity, and even development itself is an inspired passion to transform and objectify experience into something real and enduring." (304) Mourning takes on meaning, in this view, when the mourner creates a memorial, when he or she fashions something that will last, something that will be remembered in the imagined future. All of these concerns speak directly to the concerns in the war poems, as well as, even more directly, to the concerns of the war poem anthologizers. The Civil War anthologies indicate how the war is re-collected --- that is, how it is gathered, as well as how it is recalled and remembered.

To recollect here is to remember as well as to collect again --- to remember by collecting, by rereading. The war verse anthologies show us how memory is text, is form. Reading these anthologies, we can perceive links between memory, mourning, and collecting or binding anew. As I will discuss in this conclusion, the popular Civil War poems are, as war poem anthologist Henry Williams declaims, "bound to live" in many senses, and I will explore the connections these anthologies make between inevitability, mourning, remembering, and reading. According to the war poem anthologists, reading is mourning during and after this war.

Among other things, the war poem anthologies promote the idea that our stories, our texts --- our lives --- matter. The injunction "and don't forget me, dear!" sums up what the anthologies, as re-collection, are about. The war verse anthology prefaces attempt to address the nation's need to make the war, and all its dead, matter. The anthologists want to make the war deaths mean something, to matter, as well as to make them into matter, to give them form, to turn the dead into a book that can be held and kept in the way the

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13 This line is also telling in its "dear." If someone is dear to you, is connected to you, why would you worry they might forget you? This sentiment speaks to the pressing concern with memory and meaning --- remembering a life, ensuring that it mattered --- that must have been important, or at least interesting, for so many readers during the war, since it shows up in so many of the war poems.

14 It is useful to recall here that memory and mourn are the same word, etymologically. To remember is always already to mourn, to feel loss, and the war poems and their memorializing anthologies are very bound up in the mourning of remembering.
missing soldiers never can be now. Many of the anthologists point to their need to make it matter by repeatedly imagining that the books they are presenting will in fact make the war dead matter, will make them corporeal, embalmed. The dead here, as poems in a bound book, are bound to live. According to the anthologists, the book is offered as a way to make sense of the war, as well as to make it sensed, felt, able to be held and saved.\footnote{We might remember in this context that the book is one art form that is meant to be, indeed has to be, held and touched to be appreciated. The war verse anthologists gesture at this idea when they repeatedly remind us that the book is in effect the embalmed bodies of the war dead, which matter now because, for one thing, they are matter now --- they can be touched and held. Sentimental poems often play off this mixing of body and text, where the bond between readers and the sentimental text being read is supposed to be a bodily bond (tears, sighs, heart poundings). In this sense, the anthologies, as books meant to be touched, instantiate the sentimental ethos of the poems reaching out to connect or touch the readers, and are touched by the readers in that they are held as keepsakes. These poems are meant to evoke a bodily response (which, as Laura Wexler in her essay "Tender Violence: Literary Eavesdropping, Domestic Fiction, and Educational Reform," in Samuels’s compilation \textit{The Culture of Sentiment}, has shown us, in many cases often amounts to a form of policing), and the book is meant to be held, kept --- you touch it, and it touches you.}

The war poems are about those who are missing (the dead or missing soldiers), and those who miss (the mourners at home), those who are left behind to live on in conjecture in song, in poem --- in forms of fiction, that is, stand-ins or bonds for the person who is missing and now missed. The poems center on creating fictions about what might have been, what remains to be seen (in all the senses of this phrase, which I will elaborate on below), and the anthologies are an attempt at closure, at fixity, at definitive readings and sure knowledge, at last words.

Many of the anthologized poems assert (sometimes happily, other times as a lament) that after the war all that will remain of the war dead are lines of text, words, with which to remember the dead ("don't forget me, dear!"). Postwar reunification meant something different in the South and in the North, yet both sides' war verse anthology prefaces work hard to gloss over these different agendas. Most all of the postwar anthologies are consciously part of what David Blight calls "America's romance with reunion." The anthologists help to promote the country's massive exercise in nostalgia and its effort toward reunion that Nina Silber details in her book \textit{The Romance of Reunion}. Blight and Silber point out that efforts such as the anthologies' that aimed at a unified, unanimous postwar remembrance and reunion were often in fact more riddled with dissent than they were willing to acknowledge.

Blight explores the complicated ways that "...Americans made choices to remember and forget their Civil War." (2) And Silber notes that the "conciliatory culture that blossomed in the late nineteenth century" was based on "the idea of reunion \textit{as it was imagined}, and occasionally acted upon, mostly by northerners and especially by those of the middle and upper classes." (2)

The picture of a seamless, unanimous, sentimentalized transition from warring sections to reconciled nation (never mind all the issues of slavery and race that remain unaddressed in this scenario) that the war poem anthologizers present as a fait accompli is uncovered in Silber's book as being girded by other, competing issues that do not make it into the final version of the war that we read now. Silber writes that, "In the post--Civil War period, former Confederates learned to accept their loss by turning the Old South
into a land of idyllic plantation settings, heroic men, and elegant women. They transformed the system of slavery into a happy and mutually beneficial arrangement which offered enjoyment and contentment to all of its participants. In short, an army of Southern novelists, journalists, and dramatists 16 assumed command of a far-reaching campaign which resuscitated many antebellum stereotypes and deployed a romantic image of the white and wealthy antebellum South throughout the cultural landscape."

(5) Silber goes on to write that, postwar, "In effect, Northerners began to view the South, and the reunion process more generally, from the perspective of Victorian nostalgia, from a standpoint of growing concern regarding their own society's declining Victorian standards." (9)

Silber argues that efforts at reunion were not as univocal as they might appear to us now, and in her book she sets out to "understand Northern memories of the Civil War in terms of what they tell us about the social and cultural realities of the Northern people in late-nineteenth-century America, especially in terms of who did the negotiating and how that negotiation process unfolded." (4)

We can use Silber's and Blight's insights to gain a more nuanced reading of the war poem anthologists' rhetorical moves and strategies, locating the places where they attempt to persuade their readers of an already accomplished idealized postwar reunification, and finding moments where this ideal breaks down, offering us insight into the larger concerns of the period.

In the poem "In the Land Where We Were Dreaming" from War Poetry of the South, 1867, we read the lines,

...how strange and sad,
That all our glorious vision's fled
And left us nothing real but the dead
In the land where we were dreaming.

Here we read how the poets are simply trying to make sense of the recent extreme national trauma, how they are trying to put words to inexpressible loss. These lines point toward the powerful postwar sentiment, evidenced in both Southern and Northern publications, that the ideals fought for in the war are lost, and all that is left is the reality of the numberless dead bodies.

Only the dead are left, and, as the anthology editors put it, only the poems and anthologies (that is, the graves of the dead) are left of the dead. The war poem anthologies --- War Poetry of the South being one example --- and their editors repeatedly explain that they see it as their mission to collect, embalm, and preserve these dead (which are translated into the war poems, into text), and to present them for rereading in order to bind or stitch the nation back together through this mutual rereading. As Francis Browne writes in his 1886 preface to Bugle-Echoes: A Collection of Poems of the Civil War, Northern and Southern, rereading the war poems "...should serve to unite more firmly the bonds of a common patriotism" in readers.

16 Silber omits poets and poetry from her study. The issue of memory and memorializing, and a sense of nostalgia for a time now gone, can be discerned in the Confederate poems even in the early years of the war.
In the preface to his 1905 anthology *War Songs of the Blue and the Gray*, Henry Williams echoes what many of the other war poem anthologizers assert when he writes, "Let the other memories die, but the verse dwell in mind." As Williams would have it, the newly reunited nation should let the rancor, the rage, the pain, and the anger of this war die, along with the dead soldiers' bodies; only the verse should remain, only text should remain --- only the textual creations that are now stand-ins for all the "other memories."

Like many of the Civil War verse anthologists, after the war was over Williams compiled an anthology of poems from both the South and the North, claiming that rereading these previously published popular war poems would restore the nation and its once-warring readers (the nation here being white middle-class book buyers and readers). Williams writes in his preface, "On both sides, many a cloud had been tossed away by their sabers or bayonets --- and in their eyes was reflected the same sunburst of Reunion,"\(^{17}\) and he goes on to aver, "Aye, these lays live, and were bound to live --- for their themes: valor, daring, faith, enterprise, pertinacity, burning honor, all conduced to peace and national welfare. There was a greater birthright than to be Southerner or Northerner, Easterner or Westerner --- to be American!"

In promoting reunion through rereading, Williams also claims, "This Muse was never silent in the din and clash; her voice was heard between the fusillades and cannonades; it was the soft flute, soothing after the racket of brazen instruments in a military concert. Her tears quenched the torch of discord; after the trumpet-calls and war-whistles, she set to singing 'The Blue and the Gray.'" Note Williams's italics here --- he sees the read and sung verse of the war as a uniting or binding force, and his role as anthologizer is to rebind the nation within the binding of his book, recalling this dissertation's earlier comments about the importance of bonds and ties in sentimentality, and how this war and its poetry complicate ideas of bonds and boundedness, taking into account the boundaries of genre, of national sections, of race, between soldiers and the home front, and between life and death.

Nearly every war poem anthologizer I found sees national reconciliation as the aim of his or her book, and national boundaries are often put in the context of anthology bindings, where the bound book has a material effect on the newly bound nation. We can see this in the 1886 preface to Francis Browne's *Bugle-Echoes: A Collection of the Poetry of the Civil War*, where we read,

> The two classes of poems, Northern and Southern, at first intended to be placed separately in the volume, were finally brought together, for the sufficient reasons that their interest is thus increased, and in some cases it could not be determined to which side a piece belonged; and, further, that as there is no political division between North and South, there should be no division in their literature. It is hoped that nothing in this volume will shock the political sensibilities of anyone, least of all the soldiers of the war....Far from reviving sectional animosities, these echoes of a war whose memory is brightened by so many heroic deeds, in

\(^{17}\) We can recall in this context David Blight's argument in *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* that the hopeful, sentimental ideal of reunion that these writers are working so hard to promote and preserve was not as seamless as they are at pains to make it appear.
which the national mettle was so amply proved and mutual respect
came to succeed bitterness and hate, should serve to unite more
firmly the bonds of a common patriotism.

Browne casually pairs the political divisions of the North and South with their literary
output ("as there is no political division between North and South, there should be no
division in their literature"), and he takes for granted that reading the newly bound war
poems will erase any sectional strife ("Far from reviving sectional animosities, these
echoes of a war whose memory is brightened by so many heroic deeds, in which the
national mettle was so amply proved and mutual respect came to succeed bitterness and
hate, should serve to unite more firmly the bonds of a common patriotism."). According
to Browne and many of the other war poem anthologists, texts are what bind the former
sections of the country, and reading together makes us a good people, a united nation.
Acts of reading are both acts of war and acts of peace in these anthology prefaces.

I want to look at the textual implications of Williams's assertion above that the
war poems are "bound to live." Here the lost lives of the war as well as the far-flung war
poems are made into a book, they are bound into book form in order to live, they are
made alive through binding (note the medical imagery). In order to keep the memories of
the dead soldiers alive, they are bound, as poems, in a book --- the soldiers are recollected
as they are re-collected, mingling memory (recollections) with form (books as
collections). The poems, and hence the dead men, are "bound to live," meaning they are
invariably going to live because they are bound in a book. We can remember in this
context how binding (a closing, a shutting in, a suturing or tying together) is seen as
restoring life. Williams is binding the poems so they can live --- the poems are bound, or
meant, to live (the presupposed inevitability of this is all the more striking since
Williams's book is rarely read now, and likely rarely even heard of) because they have
been bound in this anthology, which sets out to shape newly nonsectional American
citizens through rereading popular, previously published verse.

Yet these very same songs and poems, when they were first published, were, by
Williams's own admission, highly sectional and divisive. These songs and poems
"uplifted the downhearted, were a crutch to the crippled, and emboldened the desperate to
a final effort. It taught them the right course, too, when the surrender came"... "[they]
enflamed, but they are now become ever-vernal. Their rhythm set the lagging forward,
caused bruised feet to step out lively." We can see an interesting mix of body and text
here. According to Williams, text repairs lagging and bruised bodies, and reading is the
bond (the adhesive, as well as the stand-in) for unjustified, bruised, and damaged bodies.
Williams's words call to mind binding wounds, the imagery of stitching back together of
wounds that is all over the war poems. Williams touches on healing, reuniting, and how
bound books bind or stitch together disparate things. The war poems are often about
death and dying, about mourning and loss, and at the moment of publication they seem to
be a kind of sentimental reworking of the war; yet when they are reissued in anthologies,
according to Williams, these very same poems are meant to revive and reunit the
mourning nation. Williams considers the previously sectional verse of the war to be a
unifying force after the war, and his role as anthologizer is to rebind the nation within the
binding of his book of reread popular lays.
These reread, republished poems (bound in an anthology, a vessel for national (re)unity, apparently) are what bind the nation; these bound poems are bound to rebind the nation. Anthologies are a rereading, a making of a new text out of already-read texts, and reunion here requires rereading, remembering (to mourn is to remember, etymologically) through reading. Similarly, the nation was being quickly rebound via Reconstruction policies, where recently disparate parts were being stitched and rebound together to make a seemingly seamless, nonsectional whole. A whole book is likened to a whole country, a coming together in writing and reading (just as in Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War's poem "Letters from Home," discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, where writing and reading binds the nation, both in grief and in reunion).

We can see this as well in the preface to William Gilmore Simms's 1867 anthology, War Poetry of the South, when he writes, "Though sectional in its character, and indicative of a temper and a feeling which were in conflict with nationality, yet, now that the States of the Union have been resolved into one nation, this collection is essentially as much the property of the whole as are the captured cannon which were employed against it during the progress of the late war." Here war materiel and war poems are conflated, and a national resolution is paired with a re-collection of war poems.

According to Williams, this verse (re)inscribes Americans as Americans. These war poems live, and are bound to live, so that the united nation can live on. In Williams's preface, as in so many from this era, nation and verse are aligned. Additionally, here the verse is imagined as being bound in a book to live, to become the living (because they are breathed back to life each time they are read or sung) replacement --- the stand-in or sentimental bond --- for the dead soldiers' bodies; and they were bound to live, suggesting inevitability, where the anthologizer's project of reunion via rereading is packaged as inevitable.

Further, in Williams's lines, the poems themselves are presented as being about peace, reunion and the bonds of reading that will unite the nation, even though in fact many of the poems were written during the war as calls to arms for one side or the other. According to Williams and other war verse anthologizers, the bonds of the newly reunited nation reading this bound book will allow readers to reincorporate all the many war dead, while all the "other memories" of discord will now "die." That is, the war's dead bodies will be revived, while the memories that do not fit into the new national project of reunion will die.

The many Civil War poetry anthologies published both immediately after the war and up until our own time are about what remains to be seen. I would like to point out the paradox both of this phrase and of the war poem anthologies themselves. The phrase in this context can be read as the remains that can be seen, touched, known (like an embalmed body or a bound book), as well as being a gesture toward the unknowable, what remains to be known, what is untouchable, unembodied, what is beyond accurate words, beyond the bounds of the known, though containable in a bound book. The war poem anthologies are about that which remains, that which is left, to be seen (which their editors make evident in persistent images of embalming and preserving). The poems in this sense are seen as the stand-in or sentimental bond for the dead bodies of the war. The

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18 An effort that we might remember was, as David Blight, Nina Silber, and Linda Frost --- among others --- remind us, not as univocal nor as seamlessly successful as many wanted it to appear.
poems are what remain to be seen, they are what is left behind after the soldiers have died on the field. The anthologies are also about what remains to be seen in terms of open-endedness or suspense.¹⁹

Suspense in particular Civil War poems is about making sense of what comes next, about not wanting to read what comes next; suspense in narrative in general is about what comes next, which calls to mind the larger social and political questions the country faced after the war. In this way, this textual question becomes a political question, and Williams attempts to address it. According to Williams, the rereading of these very poems that were about the dread and draw of reading during the war are now repackaged and rebound to help the two formerly warring sides reread and answer new questions about what comes next, about how this will all this turn out --- about, in effect, what all the dead mean and what they died for. We can view Williams's project as one where the war poems are part of an effort to package and shape the meaning of the war, part of an effort to shape the interpretations of the outcome, of what comes next.

Williams's claim that these lays are bound to live suggests a further reading as well: These poems are bound or stitched together in order to live, calling to mind the surgeon/mender/emender in "The Last Letter" in Chapter Three of this dissertation. (Indeed, in writing that these lays, during the war, were a "crutch to the crippled" and "caused bruised feet to step out lively," Williams highlights their healing powers.) The surgeon binds the severed war body so it can live, the anthologizer binds reread poems so they can live, and the war-torn nation will live because it is bound or stitched back together by its war-poetry anthology readers. Rent bodies and a rent nation are likened to poems; the poems are called out as the bonds, the stand-ins, the replacements, for the dead or mangled national and individual bodies. Williams asserts that the disunited nation will be bound or stitched back together and brought back to life through rereading the poems bound in his anthology (calling to mind Benedict Anderson's claim that the social aspect of reading during this era, and of print culture more generally, means that popular literature created the "fictive affective bonds" that can be seen as a precondition to nationalism, thereby connecting reading, bonds, and the nation).

The poems that get anthologized, by Williams and others, are almost always about death and dying, about mourning and loss during the war. At the moment of their initial publication in periodicals, the poems are a kind of sentimental reworking and rewriting of the war. Yet when they are reissued in Williams's anthology, these very same poems are meant to revive and reunite the nation, which recalls Brock's claim in her preface (looked at in Chapter Four of this dissertation) that these poems are the dead that have been collected for the purpose of mourning them. Looking again at the War Poetry of the South's poem "In the Land Where We Were Dreaming," we can read again these telling lines:

...how strange and sad
That all our glorious vision's fled
And left us nothing real but the dead
In the land where we were dreaming.

¹⁹ Fahs gestures at a similar idea when she writes, "The Confederacy would not live on as a nation, but its dead would in some sense become its corporeal and corporate representation, not only a symbol of what once was but a summons to what must be." (248)
Many of the war poems present such a bleak vision of loss, yet in the anthologists' hands they are meant to be part of the uplifting reunion and reanimation of the country. These poems and anthologies sentimentalize the war and its effects, proposing that reading these stitched together volumes of popular, periodical verse will rebind the nation, will reanimate sectional goodwill and paper over all the sorrow and loss of the war. Williams proposes that a collective rereading of chosen poems will rebind the nation, that the war-injured country will be mended and reunited in verse, in reading, and that reading the dead will somehow revive the fractured nation. The anthologies make the dead living, revivifying their remains and their memories in the poems' images and themes, and also in the fact that the anthologies are composed of rerun, reread, revived poems that were published more ephemerally elsewhere. In earlier reading-the-list poems, reading inflicted wounds; in these later anthologies, reading is restorative and healing. Reading is an act of war in many of these poems, and anthologizing is an act of interpretation meant to go some way toward mending and emending these textual acts of war.

In claiming that this verse is bound to live, and then in imagining an American reader who defies region in order to read these war poems, Williams, like many of the war verse anthologists, makes the war (or at least a certain, sentimental perspective of the war) a text. This imagined war is one that is textual, bound, and interested in images of text, textuality, and fiction making. If war is made into a bound, containable book (both in the poems' images and then as anthologies), then it can be read, which seems to imply to these anthologizers that the war experience is now bound, codified, and fixed. ("The Prisoner of War" from Harper's Weekly, 6 August 1864, suggestively alludes to the "boundaries of the grave," reminding the reader of the similarities between a bound book and the grave, possibly the last bounded place we will know, which also then calls to mind Brock's idea of her book as a graveyard.) But words and texts also always invite interpretation, an idea that these poems and anthologies seem eager at once to foreground and avoid.

If the war is a text, then the war's accumulated anthologies are a letter home from the war. They are a massive missive to the (purportedly) newly reunited nation, written from the war, and sent by the poets and their anthologizers. For today's reader, these anthologies are letters from the dead, with their poignantly sure-footed, persuasive prefaces predicting all the future readers these books will have, when in fact, if we read them at all, we crack open these musty, decomposing tomes for the first time in many, many decades. The anthologies and the poems, which were imagined as reanimating the dead soldiers, are themselves virtually dead to the American canon --- they are never read or alluded to, and the rarely reissued texts themselves are crumbling and rotten.

The post--Civil War poetry anthologies can be read as books of the dead. They are about death and its translation into printed form, as well as about what ends this printed form of death is meant to be put to. Along with the poems about lists of the dead, letters to the dead, poems on the injured body as a text to be read, et cetera, the war poem anthologies are highly textualized effects of the war. According to preface after preface in these anthologies, this war's dead are texts to be preserved, consumed, incorporated (as (re)cords and engraved hearts), saved, passed on, and even taught as primers. The anthologies, as bound books, often present themselves as trying to bind or contain an incontinent grief.
Ledyard Bill, in his *Pen-Pictures of the War. Lyrics, Incidents, and Sketches of the Rebellion* from 1864, writes of his aim for a "permanent preservation in the literature of the country," where preserving and the nation are linked. Frank Moore, in his 1886 *Songs and Ballads of the Southern People, 1861--1865*, writes in his Note to Readers that his goal is "preserving in permanent form" the poems and songs of the war. And Emily Mason, in her anthology *The Southern Poems of the War* from 1867, writes of "collecting and preserving" the war poems. In his 1862 anthology, *War Songs of the South*, William Shepperson writes, "But the newspaper can only give an ephemeral life to 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' The book embalms if it does not immortalize." Shepperson draws a parallel between live news accounts (calling to mind the many poems that claim to be live reports lifted right from the battlefield) and the war poems, and then between an embalmed history and the war poem anthologies. Here the periodical poems are ephemeral, while the poems gathered in an anthology are preserved forever; they are embalmed, implying that they were once alive and are now fixed and preserved for viewing forever.²⁰

In poems discussed earlier in this dissertation, mourners' hearts were imagined as embalming the memory of dead soldiers, and the words of songs were described as embalming memories of dead loved ones. Now in the prefaces we read that books embalm. The war poem anthologies bind the war poems in order to, as editor after editor claims, fix, preserve, or embalm these live outpourings from battle so that they can be kept and reread by a mourning, reunited people. A number of editors talk of preserving, embalming, and presenting the live poems, in this way likening the poems to bodies that will be embalmed after death and displayed in a keepsake book, the ultimate sentimental token from the war, a war that can itself be viewed as the ultimate sentimental text. Preface after preface corporealizes the poems that follow it. In the view of the anthologizers, the poems are made to matter, to mean something, by imagining them as matter, as dead bodies. According to the prefaces, the books embalm, preserve, and they are bound to live, all metaphors carrying a medical valence. Embalming in particular was an important term in the Civil War.

The use of the term embalming in the anthology prefaces was especially potent during and right after a war where so many dead bodies were subject to the still relatively new practice of embalming in America (a practice that took on added dimensions during a war when the dead were, for the first time, so far from their home burial grounds).²¹

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²⁰ Fahs, writing about postwar historians rather than postwar verse anthologizers, marks the same consolidating gestures. She notes "how meanings of the war were shaped in wartime for a broad reading public. Explicitly concerned with constructing a lasting print memory of the war, war historians occupied a special place within the commercial literary culture of war. Though their authors often drew directly from the columns of newspapers for their content, popular histories were situated quite differently than newspapers within wartime print culture: whereas newspapers were presented as immediate, urgent, disposable, war histories were conceived and advertised using a language of futurity and permanence." (288) Fahs goes on to write that "...between an uncertain present and an imagined future, [war historians were] creating a gilded and engraved object of memory out of the chaos of conflict." (310) These remarks could easily be applied to the war poem anthologizers as well.

²¹ Embalming here also reminds us of the most famous embalmed person during this period, President Abraham Lincoln, whose body was carried cross country via an elaborate funeral train. Lincoln's embalmed body being brought over long distances to its final resting spot is one very famous example of the nation's preoccupation with sentimental bonds stretching over long distances, dead bodies, and all that the war had wrought. During this war, dead bodies sent home over long distances, embalmed, are seen as closing or
Many of the war dead were embalmed --- which was new to Americans (see the work of Ashley Byock and Gary Laderman) --- because of the sheer number of dead and the far distances from home that they died. That so many died far from home during this war meant that the cherished sentimental customs and bonds surrounding death were upset. The practice of embalming in America took off during the Civil War to help maintain and enforce the prewar bonds of sentiment under nearly impossible war conditions, and in this way embalming played a key role during this war in terms of mourning, sentimental bonding, and affectional ties, making it all the more telling an image for the editors to use in relation to texts and mourning.

The choice of the metaphor of embalming and preserving in these prefaces compels the reader to liken the collected poems to dead bodies, and the anthologies to resting places for viewing the preserved dead (recalling Sallie Brock's conflation, in her 1869 anthology *The Southern Amaranth*, of dead soldiers with the texts of poems). The prefaces' imagery turns text into matter, making it matter, while also making it a body that can be preserved, embalmed. The prefaces --- in talking so often of embalming and preserving, and in conflating the poems about dead soldiers with the actual bodies of dead soldiers --- are blurring the boundaries, at least imaginatively, between text and body. In this sense, the anthologies are the ultimate sentimental keepsake, where the mingling of text and body that is part of sentimentality is so evident.

Sentimental texts are meant to move you bodily, and these anthologies highlight this text/body connection, as well as make it clear that the poems they bind are meant to be read as bodies --- as the dead bodies of soldiers that will now be remembered, re-collected, kept, and reread. In this way, we can read the anthologies as part of an effort at capturing or fixing. According to the editors, the anthologies are invested in fixing, in embalming. The anthologies capture, contain, and bind the once living, now dead soldiers and their poems. The war poem anthologists repeatedly stress the "live," from-the-heart quality of the poems (as anthologist William Gillmore Simms has it in his 1867 *War Poetry of the South*, the poems that he is preserving were penned "...with emotions that gush freely and freshly from the heart," pointing toward the era's persistent conflation of body and text) that are now embalmed, preserved, and bound to live, suggesting that the poems are bodies that are now dead and preserved for viewing, and suggesting as well that the poems are revived with each rereading for the purpose of nation building.

We can read the poems that were couched as live dispatches from the war (the poems were also often seen as the living, now dead, soldiers themselves) in juxtaposition to the boundedness and fixity of the anthology as a resting place for these once live, now embalmed poems. The poems were written claiming an extreme form of being live --- they claim to be there at the moment of death, relating the actual experience of death, which can never really be known. The poems in this way point up the extreme fictiveness of this wish, while the anthologies contain these fictions for consolation, as a memorial,

binding the gap of distance, enabling mourning at home, all of which reminds us of the notion of sentimental bonds in this era. Lincoln's embalmed body on its national funeral train, which caught the nation's news attention, neatly captures much that sentimental bonding meant in this period --- how embalming, newswires, and railroad lines connected and at the same time reminded mourners of their disconnection in this period of massive loss.

22 It is useful to note here that to fix or bind was to attach two separate things, to fasten, and the word fasten derives from the word that means to fascinate in Latin. In this way we can see that the dead these poems fix are indeed fascinating to their readers --- the dead hold the attention of their transfixed readers.
so that the poems might be read over and over once they are contained and bound in a book (which is meant to last for the ages, according to the anthologists, gesturing at their concern with history).

The anthologies promote an idea of live, ephemeral news versus a bound, fixed history. The anthology editors make a point of promoting these "live," purportedly unpolished poems as the true history of the war, since they come straight from the field - straight from the hearts (a re-cord that is embalmed and preserved) of those affected (despite their being in actuality obviously highly wrought and premeditated). What does it mean that these poems are both "...emotions that gush freely and freshly from the heart," as well as the most accurate history of the war that warrants embalming and fixing for the ages in order to promote national comity? The editors are invested in preserving and fixing, which is in alignment with the nation-building exercises these books were meant to be.23

The anthologizers see their task as one of postwar nation building, and they present the war poem anthologies as national emblems, as sentimental tokens filled with poems about "real facts," as anthologist Richard Grant White writes in his anthology Poetry Lyrical, Narrative, and Satirical of the Civil War in 1866. The anthologists evidence their concern with facts, real truths, history, and future readers. They see their project as one of nation building via rereading, and in their accounts, the resolution of the war is akin to binding the sectional war poems. (One instance of this mentioned above is Simms's claim that "Though sectional in its character, and indicative of a temper and a feeling which were in conflict with nationality, yet, now that the States of the Union have been resolved into one nation, this collection is essentially as much the property of the whole as are the captured cannon which were employed against it during the progress of the late war." ) According to the anthologists, the bound anthology will bind grief --- these bound pages will regiment grief, will contain it in measured verse --- and reading these anthologies was meant to enact or police a form of literary citizenship, erasing all war's differences and losses.

Faust writes of "a sectional reconciliation grounded not so much in the genuine resolution of political differences as in national acknowledgement of the shared experience of death and loss." ("The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying" 21) The reunion promoted by the anthologizers can in this way be read as a furthering of the importance sentimentality gave to bonds and mourning, and I would add, textuality. War death, in its poems and its war poem anthologies, was put to words in an effort to make it intelligible, meaningful, and memorable, to paraphrase Faust's essay. The nation, according to the anthologists, attempted to make sense of the overwhelming numbers of war dead by deploying the textual templates of bonding that sentimentality offered. In essence, an attempt was made to put war to words, to create a textual memorial by which to remember --- to tell --- the many, thus far untold, war dead.

Kete argues that postwar sentimentality failed in its attempts to gather the nation in reunion:

23 In this way the embalmed poems presented in the anthologies can be seen in the context of photographs and other sentimental tokens and keepsakes that were meant to fix or stop time in an effort to offer the comfort of sure knowledge while mourning, where the instantiated sentimental bonds survive death.
The promiscuity of the dead and the prevalence of mourning in the aftermath of the Civil War violence began to threaten to explode the class boundaries that sentimentality had earlier helped to establish. On the other hand, the gap between what sentimentality promised --- the conversion of grief into mourning, absence into presence, other into self --- and what it achieved was perceived as widening. (160)

The war poem anthology editors are part of this complicated process of readjusting and refining postwar ideals of sentimentality in terms of the war dead and in terms of postwar political reunion. As many of the prefaces would have it, their editors are fixing or embalming the last word on the war in their anthologies, yet, as the poems being anthologized make clear, we (those left behind to mourn) can never know these dead and these deaths with certainty, we can never fix one true meaning, one right reading of all these war deaths. The nearly incomprehensible number of America's Civil War dead pushed hard against prewar notions of comfort and consolation that sentimental mourning offered, and the war poems and war poem anthologies evidence this dis-ease, even if the poets and anthologizers did not articulate it explicitly.

The anthologists in this way promote the sentimental conflation of text and body as well as the sentimental promise of reunion through the bonds of rereading. Yet, as I have argued in this dissertation, the very poems these anthologists seek to embalm and fix the meaning of actually give the lie to this idea of fixity. The poems are often about uncertainty, unknowability, unboundedness, suspense, and gaps, and they fail to offer one fixed, presentable, preserved, unified reading, despite the editors' best efforts to package them otherwise. The anthology editors present their books essentially as bound, fixed, and embalmed bodies that easily offer the sentimental promise of the bonds of reading leading to legibility, knowability, and an uncomplicated bonding together of the war-torn nation. Yet, as I show in this dissertation, the poems often tell another story, one that the anthologists elide altogether in their haste to hail a bounded, seamless whole book as well as nation. Despite Williams's claim in his anthology that he is merely "enframing" the war --- capturing it and holding it up to view --- he and other anthology editors are part of what David Blight, Nina Silber, Linda Frost, and others have revealed as a complicated, far from unified attempt at re-viewing, remembrance, and reunion after the war. The anthologists claim to merely present the best of the war, yet their prefaces imagine a much more complicated and contradictory idea of what the war dead mean, as well as what war's words can mean after this war.

The editors, as well as the poems, are invested in resisting the boundaries of death; as Faust reminds us in her essay "The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying," the war poems are a means "...through which the deceased could continue to exist in the lives of the survivors." (7) Faust also writes that "...both the unity and responsibilities of this transformed nation were closely tied to its Civil War Dead." (This Republic of Suffering 268) She goes on to write that, "Without agendas, without politics, the Dead became what their survivors chose to make them. For a time they served as the repository [an image that is reminiscent of an anthology, a collection] of continuing hostility between North and South, but by the end of the century the Dead had become the vehicle for a unifying national project of memorialization....The Dead became the focus of an imagined
community for the reunited states...." (269) And Kete reminds us that

One way to see Reconstruction, at least in Lincoln's formulation, is as an attempt to accomplish the work of mourning for all the very real losses that individuals and states had experienced. Mourning practices, which had given rise to the various expressions of the mode of sentimentality during the antebellum years, seemed to offer a viable method for imposing order on events following the war. More than that, sentimentality promised a way to reestablish connections that death and dislocation had apparently disrupted." (157)

That the dead are what the poems are about and what they are even seen as being reminds us that this was imagined as a very personal war, one where intimate sentimental bonds were more cherished than any larger political ideals. Fahs argues this as well, writing, "In the realm of literary culture, however, the war was often interpreted as personal experience in such a way as to complicate emergent understandings of an organized or centralized nationhood." (11) Most all of the later war poetry was about personal, familial loss and grief, yet the anthologists profess to collect these domestically circumscribed poems in order to rally the postwar country around the causes of Reconstruction. Fahs also claims that "...popular literature increasingly explored the personal experience of war." (12) This focus on the personal ties and tolls inherent in war death puts a new slant on the project of remembering and reunion that the war poem anthologizers were part of; as Fahs puts it, "If readers' perceived interest in the war helped to produce war literature, war literature in turn served to direct and shape readers' responses to the war." (8)

The way this war was recalled and remembered was repeatedly textual. Aside from the war poem anthologies, one example of the importance of text in remembering the war is the poem "The Old Soldier's Reward," from Harper's Weekly, 3 April 1865, where, in a poem about how the war will be recalled, a remembering soldier repeatedly sees himself in and as text:

I saw, beyond the years to be,
An old man bending low
Above a book—a history
Of glory and of woe;
His pale lips moved without a sound,
He neither sighed nor smiled,
And one thin arm was twined around
A sunny, silent child.

Page after page he read and turned,
And many a pause made he,
As if the meaning was inurned
In some dim memory;
For though the deeds he read were wrought
By help of his right hand,
They came as slowly to his thought
As from the spirit land.

“My boy,” he said at length, “this page
Must have been writ for me:
I just remember it; an age
Ago it seems to be.
'A sergeant took the flag and ran
A rod before his men:'
My boy, I was that very man;
I see it all again.

“And here: 'The horses all were killed,
And every man but one;
The grape-shot failed; he quickly filled
A gun with pebble stone,
And fired point-blank below the smoke
Into the rebel line,
And thinned it so it turned and broke:'
My boy, that shot was mine.

“Again: 'They rushed through mist and rain
Up to the clear blue sky;
The wounded hushed their groans of pain
As 'twere a joy to die
So near to God!' I lay that night
Beneath the stars that stood
High over Lookout's silent height,
Reflected in my blood.

“And here, and here: I never thought
My deeds would find a pen.
I only for my country fought
Along with other men:
It must have been because I took
No thought of history.
The generous man who wrote this book
Has put down much for me.

“The hills, my boy, are white with snow;
I feel the creeping cold;
I hear another bugle blow
Than that I heard of old.
It calls me; I must go—good-by!
The book has paid for all:”
And then he bowed without a sigh
And answered to the call.

This poem has much to say about how this war was remembered and reimagined in and through text, about how this war was put to words. And reading this poem can help reveal what the war poem anthologies were about.

The poem opens with, "I saw, beyond the years to be," immediately inviting us to imagine the war and its effects as something made up, a hypothetical story where the war's effects can be seen as imagined, as a story that can be extrapolated and shared. In this way, we can read the war as textual right from the start of the poem.

The old soldier who, in the narrator's look ahead in time, sits down with a child to read a war history, is in effect reading the story --- the words --- of the war. Right off, the war is presented as a readable and read war. The old man (once a soldier, now a reader) bends over "...a book --- a history/Of glory and of woe," alerting readers to the war as text. The war here is recollected from a safe distance, just as it is re-collected within the comforting covers of (indeed, it takes cover in) a story or tale --- a text --- that is fit to be read to a child. The war, from this distance, in recollection, is a war of words only now, a war that is merely words on a page.

The poem wants to firmly establish this as a textual war, a war that is made available in text only, where the very details and movements of reading are highlighted: "Page after page he read and turned." The war here is a text, and this text is one that seems to echo a text written and buried in an urn somewhere deep in the poem's soldier-reader's own memory, or recollection, as we can see if we continue with these lines,

Page after page he read and turned,
And many a pause made he,
As if the meaning was inurned
In some dim memory

The war is a memory, and it is, tellingly, a read memory. And this read memory has been "inurned," or entombed, in the soldier-reader's memory. The "glory and...woe" of war here is highly textual, called and recalled through text, and this textual memory has been buried in recollection within the soldier as if it is a dead, inurned body.

The felt, fought war --- the embodied war --- is translated to text: "For though the deeds he read were wrought/By help of his right hand...." He reads of what he once lived --- he, and the war he fought, have been forever translated to text; it is no longer a living or lived thing, it is a read and readable thing. Also, he is reading of deeds he himself wrought --- his actions in the war are purely textual now, and this text has the power to call up memories and to move the soldier-reader to see himself in and as text:

"My boy," he said at length, "this page
Must have been writ for me:
I just remember it..."

The text of war --- war as words --- here writes the soldier back into the war, allowing the soldier-reader to see the words as written just for him. He relives the war by rereading his
part in the story of war. He sees or reads himself in the text of war; he in effect recalls as well as becomes the text he is reading --- and all the while we are reading him reading himself. He discovers his past self in text and as text, at the same time that he marks his lack of faith in the telling power of words:

"And here, and here: I never thought
My deeds would find a pen."

The soldier-reader, detective like, repeatedly finds himself in text ("And here, and here"), at the same time registering his surprise that his simple story would be recorded, and, paradoxically, his surprise as well that the enormity of his experience of war would fit into fitting words. He doubts that his individual part in the war was worth recording, and he seems at the same time to be remarking that he feels his war deeds would not find a pen, could not be contained or explained through authorship and text, calling to mind other poems in this period that call out the fundamental inadequacy of words.

The poem goes on to touch on ideas of elaboration and fiction. In his doubt that his war deeds would be recorded, the soldier-poet says, "The generous man who wrote this book/Has put down much for me." These lines suggest that the soldier-reader feels the story of his own part in the war that he is now holding and reading is an elaborated story. Much here has been "put down for [him]." His part in this war story has been authored and altered, has been singled out and expanded on, according to one who knows the "real story." These lines remind us of the ideas of fiction versus live news or outpourings that appear so often in the poetry of the war. The soldier-reader here implies that there is a true account of what happened, and then there is the generous, elaborated, fictional account of what happened --- a fictional account that can be read to small children, one that is fit for posterity, and one in which the characters who took part in the events fictionalized only slowly and with much surprise recognize themselves.

As the soldier-reader ends his reading of the war in the poem, he also dies. Death and text are mutually constitutive. He dies while reading of the war, while reading his own, partially fictionalized, part in this story. His reading ends as his life ends, and the one influences the other. We read,

"...I must go --- good-by!
The book has paid for all:
And then he bowed without a sigh
And answered to the call.

Reading the story of the war seems to invite or compel the soldier-reader to die. He can now die in peace because his story has been recorded, because the text of his life has been recorded, has been made permanent. His life now matters, it has been made material --- it has been transcribed into matter: a book. He even claims that the story of his part in the war is his payment for the price of having lived through the war: "The book has paid for all." Here text --- a life translated into read words --- is fit recompense for living that life. The poem suggests that a proper (and properly fictionalized) record of a life will have made that life worth living, will imbue that life with meaning. And receiving this proper textual payment --- that is, meaningful and well-authored words --- will allow a person to
die in peace, even if their life's work was war.

The reward in "The Old Soldier's Reward" is text. The best thing a dead soldier can hope for, the poem suggests, is that his deeds will be made textual, will be put to words, words that will be in future ages recorded (taken to heart), recalled (calling and calling again the life back to mind), and reread (in elaborate and artfully elaborated upon stories and poems). In this poem, text is the ultimate container or memorial for a life that has passed.

"The Old Soldier's Reward" says much about how the war was recollected textually, and, in terms of the war poem anthologies, the way the war dead were recollected can be thought about in two ways: how the dead were remembered or recollected, as well as how they were re-collected, that is, how they were collected and preserved in anthologies. In this way we can see how memory was closely allied with text, which was meant to unify the formerly sectional country. The anthologies are about war as recollection. They are vessels of recollection in that they are devoted to memory and memorializing the war dead, and they are also re-collections, binding together already-read poems in a collection. In this sense, the anthologies are a place where memory and form matter, where memory and form inflect each other. In thinking about re-collection in this way, we gain insight into what the anthologists were attempting to do --- how they aimed to collect in order to remember, how their collections were packaged as textual memorials. In countless anthology prefaces, the bound book is seen as the resting place, the grave, of the dead soldiers --- as the final place these dead soldiers and their deeds will be collected.

We see this in Shepperson when he writes, "The book embalms if it does not immortalize"; in Hayward when he writes of his hope "...that each and every particular poem might come home to some heart, and there find its abiding place through all time"; in Bill when he writes of the poems in his anthology being "worthy of permanent preservation in the literature of the country"; in Mason when she writes that she "...conceived the design of collecting and preserving the various War Poems"; in Brock when she writes that the poems she gathers in her collection are, for all intents and purposes, "...the remains of the Confederate Dead"; and in Moore when he writes that his "collection has been made with the view of preserving in permanent form."

The anthologists are very concerned with recollection in terms of both memory and text, in terms of memorial as well as collection. And they see their collected war poems as ensuring that the war dead become permanent or lasting. The anthologies are invested in a sense of preservation and the future, in permanence. In the anthologies, the war's dead bodies have become poems, which have then been collected in a book that will preserve them. The bodies are embalmed to make an anthology. Cavitch reminds us of important connections we might make between these anthologies and the mourning they contain. He writes of "'[t]he dynamic relation between mourning and genre....'" (20) Both genre and mourning deal in ends, boundaries, and separation. As Cavitch explains, "...thinking about genre is also a way of thinking about human loss," (21) because they are both "...ways of seeking to understand the relation between the singularity of an event (a poem, a death) and its inevitable repetition...." (22) The anthologies present the poems as the end, as the final resting place for the now-permanently-preserved poems, and, in effect, for the bodies that the poems write.
The war poem anthologists' project of reunion through rereading is similar to what Diffley has explicated in terms of the popular magazine fictions of the era. She writes that

...popular narratives helped to codify the events of significant social drama for a growing audience and thereby oriented the normative national culture that was taking shape....the magazine industry of the nineteenth century was singularly positioned to articulate how the Civil War would be recollected and national citizenship would thereafter be defined. (Where My Heart Is Turning Ever xix)

The verse anthologies were meant to bind and embalm the war dead so that they could be reread and reincorporated into the newly reunited nation. The poems in this sense are part of the war effort, as well as being about the war effort; they both represent and perform mourning and reunifying sentimentalizing functions; they both represent and police their supposedly newly nonsectional, mourning readers.

The war poem anthologies can be seen as consolidating war's losses through collective mourning. The many, disparate war dead are imaginatively collected and bound together in one unified book, and in this way the dead's many different mourners might now mourn collectively, as one, while reading and rereading the same book. Though separated by once-warring sections, by gender, or by class, the war's mourners might now, at least in the ideal scenes pictured forth by the anthologists, read as one.

As De Leon writes in the preface to his 1866 anthology South Songs: From the Lays of Later Days, formerly divided reading mourners might now read as one, because "The feelings that prompted [the poems] live no longer." The poems live on in a feeling-less, contained anthology because the emotions that prompted their initially being penned are dead. De Leon asserts that postwar mourners can read these war poems as a unified nation now because, "A people [the South] who have accepted the inevitable with the dignified quiet of hers, can be taught no wrong by the repetition, in perfect peace, of words spoken to them while yet in the heat of a bitter struggle." The poems are texts of the war, yet, postwar, they might be texts of peace, of reunion.

In his 1886 anthology, Bugle-Echoes: A Collection of the Poetry of the Civil War, Francis Browne explains how the once-sectional poetry would be deployed, postwar, in unified and unifying texts, the reading of which will bring together the nation, as can be seen in a key paragraph from his preface, talked about previously in this conclusion:

The two classes of poems, Northern and Southern, at first intended to be placed separately in the volume, were finally brought together, for the sufficient reasons that their interest is thus increased, and in some cases it could not be determined to which side a piece belonged; and, further, that as there is no political division between North and South, there should be no division in their literature. It is hoped that nothing in this volume will shock the political sensibilities of anyone, least of all the soldiers of the war....Far from reviving sectional animosities, these echoes of a
war whose memory is brightened by so many heroic deeds, in which the national mettle was so amply proved and mutual respect came to succeed bitterness and hate, should serve to unite more firmly the bonds of a common patriotism.

And as Henry Williams writes in the preface to his *War Songs of the Blue and the Gray*, in reading the poems he has collected, the country will "...enjoy not merely Union again, but, if possible, a closer one and one indissoluble forever."

These bound anthologies attempt to call into being a certain kind of bounded national identity (calling to mind both the affectional as well as policing elements of sentimental bonding, which are articulated by Laura Wexler and others in Samuels's essay collection, *The Culture of Sentiment*). What Fahs writes of the war poems can equally be applied to the war poem anthologies; she writes that "...poets...imagined the war gathering men together into a unified whole....Such poetry did not just reflect a new united nationhood; it attempted to imagine such unity into being rhetorically." (63)

The anthologies, as with the newly reunited states, were, as Kete writes, "...corralling them [poems, as well as readers and even political divisions of the country] conceptually." (106) The bound anthology was presented as a way to unite the divided nation through mourning and reading. The anthology, as with the reunited nation, binds the many into one, calling to mind the many versus one paradox in both sentimentality and mourning, where, as Kete writes, "Mourning was achieved through collaborations structured by the exchange of sentiment which converted many into one, the divisible into the indivisible." (105) Kete continues, writing that "this collaboration begins to close down the proliferation of possible Americans by binding it, America, to a concept of identity dependent on voluntary relationships and demonstrated by shared, naturally felt emotional truths." (106--107)

In the postwar era, defining "American" became a source of anxiety, and the war poem anthologies, in their effort to create a national identity, attempt to address this anxiety by repeatedly stressing that united reading and a common mourning will paper over any remaining sectional divisions. The anthologizers claim that the dead are not gone, rather, they have been translated into poems that can be embalmed, preserved, and kept for time immemorial. As Kete reminds us, "The act of conservation entailed, in this way, a successful act of creation or generation that denied the event of death." (157) Yet, as Silber, Blight, and Frost remind us, this sentimental creation of a keepsake or memorial in book form did not unequivocally create a reunited reading public. As Kete puts it, "Reconstruction as formulated after Lincoln's death betrayed the sentimental promise of mourning; the rituals of mourning failed to effect a utopian reunification of the national family. Instead, they brought about an increasing sense of nostalgia for a time when it was possible to imagine the nation as a family bound together on the neutral project of forming 'a more perfect Union.'" (157)

The war poem anthologists attempt to call into being a certain reading or interpretation of the war, and a concomitant national identity via reading. This point is made by Ian Finseth when he writes, "The stakes were high, for what kind of country the United States would become depended in large measure on what kind of war Americans imagined they had fought." (8) The war poem anthologists are part of what has increasingly come to be seen as a complex, layered, and often contradictory era of
postwar reconciliation. As Hutchison, in line with previous writers like David Blight and Nina Silber, writes,

...popular and historiographical accounts of the American Civil War return again and again to the war's purported ability to "condense" an American nationality --- to unite the United States. By negotiating profound sectional tensions, sacrificing a bewildering number of lives, and addressing the Constitutional paradoxes of slavery (the argument goes), the disparate citizens of the United States of America finally became "We the People." Such accounts, while persuasive and compelling, risk implying that this 'condensation' was transparent, occurring magically after the cessation of hostilities and Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April 1865....this process of condensation took hold much earlier and continued well after the war. Moreover, it took place not only on the battlefields of Manassas, Shiloh, and Franklin, but also on the pages of the poets, politicians, songwriters, novelists, diarists, and journalists who wrote and rewrote the war....record of the always-complex ways the Civil War was experienced, recollected, and remembered. (64)

Hutchison goes on to explain that postwar efforts at reunion were caught up in issues of nationalism and cultural memory: "The years 1860 to 1896 are of further interest because they are characterized by violent shifts in the experience of both nationalism and cultural memory....The presence of competing nationalisms during the war and the pressures to make Confederate nationalism disappear after the war....such competition and pressure also made cultural memory of the American Civil War a particularly vexed and dynamic phenomenon." (68)

To return to the opening of this conclusion, we read that the last words of the war poem "The Last Letter" are "...and don't forget me, dear!", marking a moment in which the last words of a poem (whose title references the last letter these last words are contained in) tell a story of wanting to be remembered in the end in words. This line sums up so much of what these war poem anthologies are about. The war poems were about the dead not wanting to be forgotten, about the dead's last words. The war poem anthologies are about the war's last words. They are about not wanting the war dead to be forgotten, and about which last words of the war are the ones worth embalming and remembering. The anthologizers' aims can be seen in the context of Civil War magazine fiction that Diffley explicates. She writes that "...such stories answered the generic question 'Will we survive?' by promising continuity, safety, and ultimately restoration." (Where My Heart Is Turning Ever 5) Continuity and restoration are what the anthologies are invested in, and just as it was important in the poems to re-code the dead's last words, their last texts, the conclusion to their life narratives, so it is imperative for the war's chroniclers and editors to offer a last word on the war and Reconstruction.

In their prefaces, the anthology editors claim to be offering the last story on the war, the last word on the war --- a last word that is imagined as being embalmed and everlasting. They are presenting a goodbye to the war era, and, importantly, by their own
lights, they are presenting the last word or final say --- the last text --- on the war. As Richard Grant White writes in his 1866 preface,

> No man, no woman, lacks a representative voice, and it would seem that no passing emotion, more than any abiding sentiment, fails of expression....The writers seem to have found in their imaginations the real facts, and in their fancies the words that most truthfully expressed them....No painted picture, no long-drawn description, could give a more faithful and vivid portraiture...

Here the war poems are seen as being the war in its truest sense. The war is its poetry, is its "real facts" in a way that history or pictures never can be. The war poem collections offer the last word, the final say on what the war was --- a final say on what it meant (and for whom it meant). As has been noted above, in his anthology preface, Henry Williams enjoins his readers to "[l]et the other memories die, but the verse dwell in mind." Nothing else of the war --- none of its complications, contradictions, or losses (all the things that the verse in question actually details, as I argue earlier in this dissertation) --- should live on. Only the verse need "dwell in mind" as the last words, the last text, of the war. Here we can see that the last word being offered is indeed to encourage readers to make the war a war of words, of text.

The war poem anthologies can be read as stories of survival. Surviving in the context of these war poems and their anthologies can be read in two ways. The poems and anthologies are imagined as a way of ensuring the survival of the memory of the dead soldiers. Those who have died in battle will now survive in text. We can also read survival in terms of those who are left behind, those who survive the dead and are left behind to make sense of them. The poems are often about the missing --- both the missing dead soldiers, as well as those who were missing from their dying moments, that is, those left behind to live on in conjecture, in poetry and in fiction. Those who missed the dying soldiers' last words, those who have survived to tell the dead's stories, are those who the anthologizers are attempting to move.

Cathy Caruth, in her work on trauma, writes of "...the profound link between the death of the loved one and the ongoing life of the survivor. In these texts..it is the inextricability of the story of one's life from the story of a death, an impossible and necessary double telling, that constitutes their historical witness." (8) Caruth also writes: "Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it? At the core of these stories, I would suggest, is thus a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival. These two stories, both incompatible and absolutely inextricable, ultimately define the complexity of what I refer to as history in the texts I read...." (7)

The war poem anthologies can be seen as a witnessing. They present themselves as offering the last word on the war, as collecting, interpreting, and presenting war's words. They contain the stories of war's death. In this way we can see that the anthologies are a double telling --- they are about "the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival." They package war death as well as offer a way of surviving it in reading and reunion.
Caruth's words speak to much that is interesting in the war poems and the war poem anthologies. Her notion of a "double telling" can comment on the way many of these poems are imagined as news, as live reports, but instead are actually layered, multiperspectival woundings, reminding us of the wound in the poem as well as the wound of reading the poem. And her idea that the story of trauma and the story of its survival "ultimately define the complexity of what [she refers] to as history" offers a new way of thinking about the war poems, which are imagined as live news reports versus the anthologies as historical projects, as well as the knowing versus not knowing that the poems are so often about. The anthologies are essentially stories of survival and what to make of this survival, and, as Caruth reminds us, a story of survival is also a story of death; the crisis of death is bound up in the crisis of life.

This sense of a double telling --- that the story of this war's death is also the story of surviving it; the anthologies' "impossible and necessary double telling, that constitutes their historical witness" (Caruth 8) --- offers an interesting counterpoint to ideas of last words. We can read the anthologies as the editors' last words on the war, and we can also see the idea of last words in many of the poems that depict scenes of last words, said or left unsaid. As Faust reminds us, sentimentalism put untold emphasis on a dying loved one's last words. Faust writes, "A life was a narrative that could only be incomplete without this final chapter, without the life-defining last words." ("The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying" 6) Faust writes that witnessed last words were vital in sentimental mourning, "...so that [one's loved one's] death might bring a satisfactory conclusion to life's narrative." (This Republic of Suffering 28) Last words during the Civil War, when so many dead died so far from home, away from loved ones' listening, took on new significance.

The war poem anthologies offer a rereading. Rereading is recollecting in that it is remembering. Rereading is also reliving, putting breath back into the words of the (imagined and quoted) dead, and re-calling them (calling them back, as well as remembering them). As Hoffman argues,

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Just as contemporary Civil War reenactments on the battlefield seek to remember and honor, so too every time we read a poem produced by the war, we are put into the position of re-enactor: we are called on to remember, to revive the past in terms of the present, to review that literature in the light of our own experience of war and the moral questions that war raises. (81)
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The war poem anthologies extend the lives of the dead soldiers. The texts revive the dead bodies as readers breathe life into them, and as the nation is imagined to breathe as one when the poems are read. The poems transform death into life, giving body to the dead words as they are breathed anew with each rereading or resinging.

That the anthologists claim to offer the last word, the final say, on the war speaks to the overall claim of my dissertation: This was a war that was shot through with text, with words. My central claim has been that war and words work together in complex ways in this era, both as a way of recording and remembering, and also as a marker of words' failure to record or connect. As Ian Finseth reminds us, "'The struggle to talk during and after violence,' Daves writes, 'is language's struggle to regain mastery over..."
violence...."

(8) The violence of war both can and cannot be adequately put to words, yet these poems and their anthologizers make it clear that this war was, above all else, a text, a story (the poem "When the Boys Come Home" from Harper's Weekly, 18 June 1864, aptly describes what it means to end the war by putting it into a textual context: "We will end the dreadful story"), that needs to be interpreted, read and reread, and kept. The anthologies are about reunion through rereading, putting text squarely in the war and postwar concerns. My claim in this dissertation has been about the complex connections between words and war during this period, and the anthologies claim to be offering the last word, to be offering the final story on this war's violence. How the war is re-collected is a textual reckoning, and these poems and anthologies say (and fail to say) sentimental mourning in complicated ways.

The war poem anthologies offer a way for those left behind mourning to maintain sentimental bonds beyond the bounds of death. As Mark Schantz writes, "In some sense, those who died in the death poems never really died; they were simply translated into a new state of existence." (108) In this way, the war dead were translated (note Schantz's textual allusion) both into a heavenly realm, as well as into a readable poem, evidencing two ways of calling/re-calling (a calling again, as well as as remembering) the dead: by reading and rereading, as well as by being called to heaven in the poems. According to the anthologizers, re-calling and remembering is rereading. The rereading that the anthologies promote, where the poems being reread are seen as the dead bodies of the soldiers, is very much about the ties of sentimental bonds. Schantz touches on this as well when he goes on to write that, "Those who composed odes to departed friends in heaven yearned for some form of continuing contact beyond the grave." (109) The anthologies offer sentimental bonding in abundance. The anthology editors encourage their readers --- the recently divided nation --- to bond with the dead soldiers as well as the still living mourners throughout the nation by rereading and remembering. The anthologies offer textual contact as a way to bring the dead back to life. Mourners across the nation are encouraged to repeatedly read their lost loved ones back to life. In a wartime of hasty burials far from home, these war poems and their anthologies package themselves as the grief, the funeral, and the final resting spot for the dead all in one, marking grief as entirely textual. According to the anthologists, grief in this way is something you can bind, contain, and carry with you, close to your heart, where you can read and reread, where you can reanimate and remember the dead by rereading them, and you can reunite the nation through a shared memory and a shared grief. Schantz speaks to this when he writes, "If a poem could take the place of a monument, if verse could substitute for marble, then the death poem allowed members of the Civil War generation to conjure up the dead and to celebrate them even when they died miles from home." (102)

The anthologies, like popular war songs sung by the nation seemingly in unison, were meant to bind the nation in grief and in words. The war verse, or popular war songs, can be read as doing some of the same things we see the anthologists attempting to do. To return again to the war poem anthologist Henry Williams in his 1905 War Songs of the Blue and the Gray, we read,

Aye, these lays live, and were bound to live --- for their themes:
valor, daring, faith, enterprise, pertinacity, burning honor, all
conducted to peace and national welfare. There was a greater birthright than to be a Southerner or Northerner, Easterner or Westerner --- to be American! Spartan was well; Athenian was as good, but Greek is better. Hence, these lyrics are not to be left hushed in the dust; preserve them, re-sing them, teach them yet to the young; they repeated them whose best blood enriched our Aceldama, where are hallowed tombs --- and on them thrive these everlasting flowers --- true immortelles.

Here the war's songs and poems immortalize the war's dead. The songs, sung again and again, both during the war as well as postwar, will revive and save the dead from death. Singing and resinging the war verse will somehow preserve or keep beating the once living and now stilled heart of the soldier, as well as the heart of the nation. The unifying anthology is seen in terms of the unifying power of popular songs. The unifying beats of song will unify the heartbeat of the nation --- both the (revived) dead and the living.

We can see images of song and its unifying properties at work in the poem "At Fredericksburg," from The Blue and the Gray:

No need to tell their tale: through every age
The splendid story shall be sung and said;
But let me draw one picture from the page
For words of song embalm the hero dead.

Here, "The splendid story shall be sung and said." The war dead's story, their words, the text that composes them, will be sung and said. It will be repeated and put to a beat, scored. To score is a key verb here --- the dead will be written, they will be marked, counted, composed, and recorded. This is a re-cord (a tally and a memory written on the heart, gotten by heart, breathed out from the body in song) and record (a list, a recording) of the dead. Also, we read that "words of song embalm the hero dead," inviting us to envision the song, the beat, as well as its words, its text, as keeping the dead, as preserving the dead. In effect, the words of the songs will be the graves of the dead, they will preserve and fix the dead for all time, creating a record, a re-cord. The words of song embalm. Words of song, gotten by heart, can embalm the dead, just as books, records, can embalm, can fix the dead.

In addition to bodies and the land being written on and scored (with its musical connotations), many of the war poems were put to music, and many of the songs were printed as poems. As Fahs writes,

The importance of songs throughout the Civil War, in both the North and South, cannot be overestimated. Sung around the piano or a cappella in parlors, at public gatherings, on the march by soldiers, and in camp, war songs, like war poetry, were widely understood to be an important part of a patriotic culture that united the private world of the parlor with a larger public world. Throughout the war, the "line between poems and songs was so extremely fine as to disappear in most cases." Poems were
often put to music and printed as sheet music; conversely the lyrics
of popular songs were often published individually in song sheets
or collected in cheap pamphlets called songsters. (55)

This was a war that was set to a beat, to a rhythm. The war was a re-cord, a recording,
that was got by heart, as this line from Harper's Weekly's poem "A Soldier's Burial," 22
July 1865, puts it: "And in step with the pulsing music/We passed from the place
away./And left our comrade to slumber/In his grave on the wooded hill." In the poem
"On the March," from America's Historical Newspapers, we read of "That equal,
measured pace," and, "In many a weary, weary line," the war is set to a rhythm, to a beat,
and lines of soldiers are conflated with lines of verse. And again we read this image in
this line in "John Lorence," from Harper's Weekly, 31 March 1862, "And every heart beat
strong;/For every manly soul kept time/To the musket-bullet's song." We read in "The
Prisoner of War," by Fitz James O'Brien, from Harper's New Monthly Magazine,
February 1862, originally from In Camp, December 1861:

I sing the irregular song of a soul that is bursting with pain!
   There is no metre for sorrow, no rhythm for real despair ---
Go count the feet of the wind as it tramples the naked plain,
   Or mimic the silent sadness of snow in the air!
I can not control my heart, nor my innate desire of song,
   I only know that a wild and impetuous grief,
A fierce, athletic, vengeful feeling of wrong
   Beats at my brain to-night and must have relief!

As the poet claims, "I sing the irregular song of a soul that is bursting with pain!/There is
no metre for sorrow, no rhythm for real despair." Though the nation's war grief was set to
a beat and was read and reread in all the scores and records the war poems present, this
poem claims that real sorrow, true grief is beat-less. It is beyond articulation, beyond
fitting into song or poem, which sentiment of course is fit into a popular poem, again
reminding us as readers that we are reading, that this war was very textual.

When these war poems are sung and read and reread (especially aloud, together),
they are, as Peter Shabad has written in a different context, "infused with the meaningful
breath of real life, if only for a moment." (134) The songs and the dead soldiers they sing
about become literally inspired, reanimated, and revived each time they are read, reread,
or sung. As the poems are sung, they become a re-cord, a tale inscribed onto the heart.
The poems, in a very sentimental move, are made into body. The words that transcribe
the dead soldiers are made to go through the readers' and singers' bodies in breath, in
word, in unison. The dead soldiers' bodies are brought back to life, for a moment, with
each breath that is taken to read or sing these war verses.

The most well-known example in this poetry of how the war was imagined as a
rhythm, as a beat that moves the body of the soldier as well as the body of a nation, a re-
cord that was written and scored on the heart, is Walt Whitman's "Beat! Beat! Drums!,"
from Harper's Weekly, 28 September 1861:

Beat! beat! drums!—Blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows—through doors—burst like a force of armed men,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation;
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his bride;
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace plowing his field or gathering his grain;
So fierce you whirr and pound, you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! Blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses?
No sleepers must sleep in those beds;
No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators.
Would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—and bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! Blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley—stop for no expostulation;
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer;
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man;
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties. Recruit! recruit!
Make the very trestles shake under the dead, where they lie in their shrouds awaiting the hearses.
So strong you thump, O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

Here the entire nation has become a beat --- a beat of war song or poetry, as well as a unified, national heartbeat. In Whitman's poem, the beat is a call to the entire nation, it is a pulse that moves the country, just as the war poem anthologizers hoped to move the nation as one in rereading.

We read in Harper's Weekly's "In Time of War," 15 August 1863, that "The nation's pulse hath an unsteady beat." The nation, set to a beat, is anxiously awaiting news. The united pulse of the nation, the collective breath or re-cord of the nation, is suspended, waiting for the "extras," for the texts that will read their fate to them. The poem reads:

There are white faces in each sunny street,
And signs of trouble meet us every where;
The nation's pulse hath an unsteady beat,
For scents of battle foul the summer air.

A thrill goes through the city's busy life,
And then—as when a strong man stints his breath—
A stillness comes; and each one in his place
Waits for the news of triumph, loss, and death.
The “Extras” fall like rain upon a drought,
And startled people crowd around the board
Whereon the nation's sum of loss or gain
In rude and hurried characters is scored.

Perhaps it is a glorious triumph gleam—
An earnest of our Future's recompense;
Perhaps it is a story of defeat,
Which smiteth like a fatal pestilence.

But whether Failure darkens all the land,
Or whether Victory sets its blood ablaze,
An awful cry, a mighty throb of pain,
Shall scar the sweetness from these summer days.

God! how this land grows rich in loyal blood!
Poured out upon it to its utmost length,
The incense of a people's sacrifice—
The wrested offering of a people's strength!

It is the costliest land beneath the sun!
'Tis priceless; purchaseless! And not a rood
But hath its title written clear and signed
In some slain hero's consecrated blood.

And not a flower that gems its mellowing soil
But thriveth well beneath the holy dew
Of tears, that ease a nation's straining heart,
When the Lord of battles smites it through and through.

The nation holds its breath as one, waiting to read the news. The heartbeat and the breath of the nation move as one, as all wait to read, wait for text that will relieve their suspense. The nation waits with one breath for the news that will be scored, will be rudely etched onto a board. The nation breathes as one, then reads as one, keeping beat, keeping score as one. They will read and reread their fate together, both on the board of the poem as well as in the poem itself. The poem goes on to imagine how the nation's land itself is purchased through the blood of its soldiers: "And not a rood/But hath its title written clear and signed/In some slain hero's consecrated blood." Spilled blood writes the nation, is written, signed, onto the land, another re-cord that textualizes the war.

These war poems imagine again and again that the warring nation was mourning to a beat, to a song, to a poem, as if marching together. These poems put the war to a rhythm, to a poem. The poems serve as a remembrance of the dead, they are written records on the heart, they are learned and sung by heart, and their words mark the beat of the heart. The poem "The Drummer of Company C," by J. W. Watson, from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 26 July 1862, makes much of the image of the telling beat of the heart, keeping time to the war:
Here, Sergeant! hail me yon ambulance; this boy is one of our corps; He must not be left till the cart returns, for the night is cold and raw. Gently! turn his face to the moon, it will soon be from under the cloud. By Jove! he has chosen a glorious couch, where the ground is newly ploughed. Loosen his jacket and slide your hand till you feel the beats of his heart, Then lift him quietly out of the rut and carry him on to the cart.

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That ugly minie has scored his breast like the gash of a jagged knife,

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"They'll tell ye I stood at the right of the line, and gave them the double quick, And that never a beat of their hearts was lost I could echo with my stick.

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I remember the parting volley they gave, there's some of it here in my breast, But after that it was cold and dark, and I have forgotten the rest.

In this poem we read that one of the men attending the wounded drummer boy is instructed to "[I]oosen his jacket and slide your hand till you feel the beats of his heart." The heart is what is "read" and interpreted, the felt beat is what the men search for as the bond that will allow them to read, to interpret, and to re-cord the situation. The drummer boy's breast, his heart, is a written re-cord, for it has been scored, written on, by the knife of war, and the rest of his company is instructed to read his condition, to keep his heart, his re-cord of the war.

Farther in the poem we read of the drummer boy essentially transcribing the heartbeats of the soldiers with the beat of his stick: "And that never a beat of their hearts was lost/I could echo with my stick." He marks the beat of their hearts, just as his heart was marked and scored by the minie of war. (Calling to mind Oliver Wendell Holmes's remarks in his lecture on war poetry, "These ballads and sentimental pieces which are numbered by the thousands, -- 'Mother Kissed Me in My Dream' is marked 1201 --- which are pinned up by the hundred dead walls and piled up by the gross on counters24 -- - which have been dinned in our ears by all manner of voices until they have made spots on our ear-drums like those the drumsticks make on the drum-head, --- do not get the credit they often deserve.") Indeed, the drummer boy's heart itself contains traces of the war re-cord that he will take with him to the grave, as he tells of the parting volley: "there's some of it here in my breast." Where some images in these poems describe mourners' hearts as the graves of loved soldiers, here the drummer boy's heart is written on and will forever carry the mark, the text, as well as the bullet, of war. Both these scores and this re-cord on the heart serve to textualize the war yet again.

In keeping with their interest in the connections between text, sentimental bonds, death, and mourning, the war poem anthologies often package themselves as the last word on the war (and hence the first word on reunion). Last words also play a large part in the war poems. Many poems are about a dying soldier's last words, and the heart of these poems is announcing whether these last words are witnessed or not, tying in to

24 Again we can see how texts are imagined as being all over this war.
ideas of survival and storytelling. The poems urge their readers to contemplate what it means to let someone die unwitnessed, to miss their last words. Many poems imagine what it means to survive to tell the story of another's death --- they explore the imperative to tell, to create text in tandem with sentimental bonds and mourning. Cathy Caruth marks this moment of surviving to tell of another's last words as "...an act of homage to the missed reality...." (105) In the poem "Left Wounded on the Field" from Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War: Selected from Our Union Poets, we read,

Our dead and wounded soldiers lie,  
With none to bind their bleeding wounds,  
Or hear their last words ere they die.

These lines exhibit two central concerns in this poetry and in these anthologies: binding the wounds of the soldiers, of the nation, through binding the poems into anthologies; as well as hearing, re-cording (taking words to heart, incorporating) the last words, which the anthologies achieve, according to the anthologists.

The poems' focus on soldiers' dying last words\(^{25}\) reminds us yet again of the mix of text and death in this poetry, and the anthologies in turn are an example of last words writ large, as they are, according to the anthologists, the last words, the last re-cord, the last texts, of the war. The anthologists present their anthologies as the last words of the war dead, words that require a witness, and in witnessing, in reading the dead, the mourning nation will be reunited. Last words --- last texts --- are a kind of sentimental bonding. As Faust writes, in the sentimental era, a loved one's dying last words were imagined to "reinforce connectedness," and witnessing them worked "to overcome separations." ("The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying" 15)

Returning briefly to Phoebe Cary's poem "The Hero of Fort Wagner," we can see a rare portrayal of an African America's last words in this war:

Brave men were there, for their country's sake  
To spend their latest breath;  
But the bravest was one who gave his life  
And his body after death.  
No greater words than his dying ones  
Have been spoken under the sun;  
Not even his, who brought the news  
On the field at Ratisbon.

\(^{25}\) Just one example among many are the lines "This to my mother --- father --- all --- /Relate, when of my death you tell" from the poem "Oh! Take Me Home to Die," by J. Henry Hayward, in his 1864 anthology Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War: Selected from Our Union Poets. Here the dying soldier's last words are "when of my death you tell," ensuring that his last words are seen as doubly textualized --- they are his last words, and these last words are about telling, about words, about recounting the story, the text, of his death to loved ones who did not witness it. We can see in these lines the urgency with which death was imagined as a story that needed telling, a text that required a witness. The dying soldier in these lines needs to make sure his death --- the end of his life story --- is told and remembered. Additionally, the soldier appears in these lines to instruct the unnamed witness in the poem on how to tell the text of his death, in this way recalling images of a primer that the empty sleeve poems in this dissertation detailed, as well as calling to mind the anthologizer Williams's words on teaching, which I will talk about below.
I was pressing up, to try if yet
    Our men might take the place,
And my feet had slipped in his oozing blood
    Before I saw his face.
His face! it was black as the skies o'erhead
    With the smoke of the angry guns;
And a gash in his bosom showed the work
    Of our country's traitor sons.
Your pardon, my poor boy! I said,
    I did not see you here;
But I will not hurt you as I pass;
    I'll have a care; no fear!
He smiled; he had only strength to say
    These words, and that was all:
"I'm done gone, Massa; step on me;
    And you can scale the wall!"

This black soldier dies fighting, and after he dies his body becomes a stepping-stone ("the bravest was one who gave his life/And his body after death" --- these lines imagine the black soldier dying doubly; he gives his life, and then he gives his body) for a white soldier ("Massa"). The dying last words of the black soldier ("No greater words than his dying ones/Have been spoken under the sun") are an invitation to use his dead body to step on and over ("'I'm done gone, Massa; step on me;/And you can scale the wall!'"'). His last words serve to write him out of the story. His last words urge the white soldier (and the white readers of Cary's poem) to keep him underfoot, to triumphantly move up and over him, to use him to enable this story of uncomplicated triumph to continue without him, without his story.

The anthologies present themselves as the last word on the war, offering a right reading of all the death that they bind and contain. They are part of a sentimental understanding of the war, an understanding that was very much about texts and the bonds of reading. The importance of text in sentimental bonding and last words is stated by Faust when she writes that "]]ong after the dying was over, Americans North and South sought to add epilogues to their wartime death narratives." ("The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying" 19) War death is put into a textual context, and the anthologies are there to offer this last word, this epilogue. In this way, the anthologies are about having the final say, about knowability and containability --- they claim to offer last words that can be contained and explained, but that, as I hope to have shown in this dissertation, are not as easily explicated as the anthologists would have it.

There is no clear-cut ending, no one conclusion or consolation in these anthologies, despite their prefaces to the contrary. And in spite of some of the poems they bind that offer compelling images of closing the book on the war. One such poem is The Anglo-African's "The [text unclear] Year of the Nation," which reads, in part,

Closed is the book whose crimson-lettered pages
Are blurred and blotted by a nation's grief
Sealed are all the ponderous tomes of ages
By Him who turned for us its darkest leaf.
Not ours that volume to revise...
The lines that tell what deeds of shame were done

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Many the chapters dark with fear and failing

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There wrote we how the land was rent with wailing

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The lists we lingered o'er with reverent sorrow....

In this poem about the book of the war (a poem that makes the war textual at every turn), the text of the war --- which is composed of bloodied letters and whose pages are stained with tears --- is imagined as being closed. The war, which here is a painful, dark, and bloodied book, is sealed and closed. All the death and pain and trauma of the war is contained in these "lines that tell what deeds of shame were done." There is no war outside of words, of text, according to the imagery of this poem. Presentable lines contain unpresentable pain, and these lines are not open for revision ("Closed is the book"). This poem is about the war as text, and about this text being all said and done: "Not ours that volume to revise."

Yet the anthologies of these poems, in spite of their claims to contain or give a sense of boundedness to the war, are actually about what remains to be seen. They are about not knowing. The boundedness of the books does not ensure that the war's issues are not still unbounded. An image in Melville's poem "Donelson" nicely sums up the unfulfilled plan of the anthologies:

Then splintering and ripping went ---
Nothing could be its continent!

Despite the aims and best efforts of the anthologists, all of the death of the war, all of its unanswered questions about race and representation, and all of its concerns with sentimental connections that fail to acknowledge doubt, remain uncontrollable, incontinent, and unbounded. The war dead might be imagined as being made into text, as being embalmed and preserved, yet this did not give rise to an immediate and univocal sense of national rereading and reunion that the anthologists were so sure of.

And, poignantly, these bound bodies of the imagined war dead --- these anthologies --- that were promoted as being ever vernal, as being the surest way to save and never forget the many war dead, are all but forgotten now. To return yet again to the war poem anthologist Henry Williams in his 1905 War Songs of the Blue and the Gray, we read,

Aye, these lays live, and were bound to live --- for their themes: valor, daring, faith, enterprise, pertinacity, burning honor, all conduced to peace and national welfare. There was a greater birthright than to be a Southerner or Northerner, Easterner or Westerner --- to be American! Spartan was well; Athenian was as good, but Greek is better. Hence, these lyrics are not to be left
hushed in the dust; preserve them, re-sing them, teach them yet to
the young; they repeated them whose best blood enriched
our Aceldama, where are hallowed tombs --- and on them thrive
these everlasting flowers --- true immortelles.

These poems are imagined as being the last words we will hear of the now-dead
soldiers ("they repeated them whose best blood enriched our Aceldama"), and these last
words of the dead are then imagined to be the last words of the war that will, now
preserved, last forever ("true immortelles"). This urgent concern with immortality is
heartbreaking, given that these poems and their anthologies have all gone virtually unread
for decades and decades. Faust writes of the sorrowful plaint of a dying soldier's last
words in a last letter home during the Civil War: "This is the last you may ever hear from
me." ("The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying" 10) So many of these poems and
anthologies echo this sentiment --- this wanting to be heard, to be remembered.
As we read in the opening to this conclusion, the last words of the war poem "The
Last Letter," by Charles Lever, in Poetical-Pen Pictures of the War, are "...and don't
forget me, dear!" These poems and their anthologies offer the last word on the war dead
and the war's meanings, they ask that we always remember these dead and their texts and
what they meant. Yet, in spite of Williams's conviction, the poems were indeed bound,
but not to live. Williams exhorts the poems' readers to "preserve them, re-sing them,
teach them." Though "left hushed in the dust" in so many unread tomes now, these poems
and their anthologies offer much to think about, much that is worth preserving, re-
singing, and teaching.
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