

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## First Encounters

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*“You think you remember . . . the first date with someone you subsequently fell in love with. . . . Investigation . . . will . . . prove otherwise. . . . Your remembered life was different, and lived by someone else.”*

—Jonathan Kearns, *Empire of the Imagination*.

When I’m trying to compose,  
I try plotting the next chapter,  
Imagining what should come next  
Some resolution, or maybe not yet.  
Reading my draft today draws me  
In a backward direction.  
For every action  
Began somewhere else  
In a past that’s long forgotten.  
When did we agree — to what? to wed?  
Or further back, go on a date?  
But first, we had to meet  
Somewhere.  
In the library? At a choir rehearsal?  
At a dance? In a classroom?  
Does it matter?  
Now that we’ve walked together  
For over fifty years,  
Perhaps I should return to the origins.  
Make clear how it happened.  
It might have been a chance decision,  
Looking for a place to study, to relax, to read,  
Where was it?  
The precise locale when I first saw  
The one with whom I’d spend my life.  
Did I notice him? Or he, me?  
Jane’s sees an angry Rochester,  
Tossed from his horse at her feet;  
Levin at the icy pond watches Kitty,

Her hands in a muff, skating toward him;  
Or a stunned Anna, meets Vronsky  
As she steps from the train.

But where did you come from?  
How did I find you?