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**A Life on the Ramparts:
Transience and the Apprehension of Beauty
in Puccini's *Tosca***

But, less disappointing than life, great works of art do not begin by giving us the best of themselves.

-Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*

Art rectifies the failings of our minds: we are simply not very good at grasping the fact of ourselves as time-bound creatures...Art too can help, for it is an imaginative force that goes ahead of the present and prepares our rationale and sensory selves for where nature will eventually lead us.

-Alain de Botton & John Armstrong, *Art as Therapy*

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Introduction

An ever-evolving aesthetic loop exists between one's early experiences of certain works of art, literature, and music, and one's deepening appreciation of these works as time passes and life is lived. Such works may or may not be acclaimed by others but are distinguished by taking root in us and becoming personal touchstones revisited frequently as cultural companions. Just a few examples of my own would include Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, Updike's *Rabbit Angstrom*, the paintings of William Turner and Howard Hodgkin, Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde*, Miles Davis' *Birth of the Cool*, and, in opera, Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungen*, Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Puccini's *Tosca*. The latter is particularly apropos for the purpose of this essay, not only because it is a touchstone work which has become more resonant as I have lived with it over the

decades, but also because I believe its latent content across its three acts implicitly symbolizes an important existential and psychoanalytic theme.

In this spirit, I explore the manner in which the three major arias in *Tosca* portray a developmental arc from the innocence of youthful idealism to the encounter with the inevitable obstacles the world presents to this idealism, and ultimately to an integration characterized by acceptance of the transience and mystery of the aesthetic object, in this case, life and existence itself. To frame my discussion, I will begin with a brief background of the opera as well as some conceptual psychoanalytic scaffolding from Freud and Meltzer.

Tosca: A Brief Background

Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* is an *opera verismo* first performed in 1900 and is set in Rome in 1800 while the city labors under a regime of oppression and Machiavellian politics. The three principal characters are Floria Tosca, a renowned singer, Mario Cavaradossi an idealistic painter and freethinker who is Tosca's lover, and Scarpia, the ruthless, power-hungry chief of police. To summarize the plot, Scarpia uses torture and threat of execution to coerce political secrets from Cavaradossi but promises Tosca to spare Cavaradossi in return for her sexual favors. To conceal this corrupt arrangement, Scarpia guarantees a sham execution to fool the public, after which Tosca and Cavaradossi will be ensured safe passage out of Rome. When the plan appears to be prepared, Tosca, rather than submitting to Scarpia, instead murders him, believing she has triumphed over evil and saved Mario. Scarpia however, gets revenge even in death because his promise was a sham; he has actually arranged a real execution. At the Castel Sant'Angelo prison fortress towering above Rome, the firing squad fires. Kneeling by

Cavaradossi's body, Tosca realizes she has been tricked and has lost everything. In an instant, before the guards can arrest her, she jumps to her death from the ramparts of the fortress, and the curtain comes down.

Transience, and the Apprehension of Beauty

While putting *Tosca* 'on the couch' easily lends itself to familiar psychoanalytic discussions of love, lust, aggression, power, greed, and perversion, I will approach *Tosca* from a road less travelled in mainstream psychoanalysis, namely, that of the impact on the psyche of both beauty and transience. Freud's essay *On Transience* (1916) and Meltzer and Harris' book, *The Apprehension of Beauty* (1988), will serve as reference points here. Both lend themselves to extensions beyond the boundaries of personal neurosis (drives, oedipality, attachment, object-relations, and cultural interpolation) and into the fundamental existential domain in which the very givens of existence must be reckoned with and worked through.

Freud's short essay, *On Transience* (1916) was written during the First World War, a time of intense political conflict and cultural upheaval. The prolonged savagery of trench warfare came as a shock to those who had assumed that European culture had been steadily progressing since the Age of Enlightenment. The resulting disillusionment was an important factor ushering in the post-modern sensibility, one premise of which was that every generation will need to fight regressive and primitive forces anew. The sobering truth of this realization and the similarities between Freud's world a century ago and global events today are painfully obvious. Freud wrote his essay stirred by an exchange with a despondent poet, during a stroll in which the beauty of their immediate

surroundings contrasted starkly with the catastrophic violence occurring elsewhere in Europe:

The poet admired the beauty of the scene around us but felt no joy in it. He was disturbed by the thought that all this beauty was fated to extinction, that it would vanish when winter came, like all human beauty and all the beauty and splendor that men have created or may create. All that he would otherwise have loved and admired seemed to him to be shorn of its worth by the transience which was its doom (Freud, 1916, p. 305).

Freud emphasized that an awareness of transience should not be an obstacle, but rather is an essential element in deepening our appreciation of beauty in life. However, a few years later he was less sanguine in *The Uncanny* (1919) wherein he highlighted the intense dreads and uncertainty that arise from awareness of transience and personal mortality. Unfortunately, the German to English translation of *Das Unheimliche* into *The Uncanny* denudes the title of the connotations of dread and horror that Freud made central to his discussion of emotion and aesthetics.

The subject of the ‘uncanny’ is a province of this kind. It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread and horror...As good as nothing is to be found upon this subject in comprehensive treatises on aesthetics, which in general prefer to concern themselves with what is beautiful, attractive and sublime—that is, with feelings of a positive nature—and with the circumstances and the objects that call them forth, rather than with the opposite feelings of repulsion and distress (Freud, 1919, p. 219).

Putting the dual perspectives of transience and the uncanny together, we can see that an awareness of the transience of life will result in a complex nucleus of emotional reactions with gratitude and appreciation for life on the one hand, and dread, mourning, and uncertainty on the other. Many subsequent writers picked up on Freud’s lead and

positioned awareness of transience and mortality as an essential and progressive task of adult development (Jacques, 1965; Lachman, 1985; Colarusso & Montero, 2007; Kernberg, 2008; Yalom, 1980, 2008).

In *The Apprehension of Beauty* (1988), Meltzer and Harris introduced their concept of “the apprehension of beauty” and the presence of “aesthetic conflict”. Their theme is the struggle within each of us between aesthetic sensibilities and the forces of philistinism. Meltzer and Harris’s concepts are still relatively marginal in mainstream psychoanalysis though they are gradually being absorbed and applied to infant observation, transference love, narcissism and couples’ therapy (Harris, 2018). Because I regard Meltzer as one of the ground-breaking theorists of the modern era, and the concept of the aesthetic conflict as a profound contribution to psychoanalysis, I will take the liberty of quoting at some length their evocative prose:

The ordinary beautiful, devoted mother presents to her ordinary beautiful baby a complex object of overwhelming interest, both sensual and infra-sensual. Her outward beauty, concentrated as it must be in her nipples and in her eyes, bombards him with an emotional experience of a passionate quality, the result of his being able to see these objects as ‘beautiful’. But the meaning of his mother’s behavior, of the appearance and disappearance of the breast and of the light in her eyes are unknown to him. He has, after all, come into a strange country where he knows neither the language nor the customary non-verbal cues and communications. The mother is enigmatic to him: she wears the Gioconda smile most of the time and the music of her voice keeps shifting from major to minor key. Like ‘K’ (Kafka’s not Bion’s), he must wait for decisions from the ‘castle’ of his mother’s inner world. He is naturally on guard against unbridled optimism and trust, for has he not already had one dubious experience at her hands, from which he either escaped or was expelled---or perhaps he, rather than his mother was ‘delivered’ from the danger! Even at the moments of most satisfactory communication, nipple in mouth, she gives an ambiguous message, for although

she takes the gnawing away from inside, she gives a bursting thing which he must expel himself. Truly she giveth and she taketh away, both of the good and bad things. He cannot tell whether she is Beatrice or his Belle Dame Sans Merci. This is the aesthetic conflict, which can be most precisely stated in terms of the aesthetic impact of the outside of the ‘beautiful’ mother, available to the senses, and the enigmatic inside which must be construed by creative imagination. Everything in art and literature, every analysis, testifies to its perseverance through life. (Melter & Harris 1988, p. 22)

“Apprehension” is a key term that brilliantly captures the dialectic between *perceiving or grasping* (to apprehend) and to be *anticipating with anxiety* (to be apprehensive). Drawing some distinction between beauty (pleasant beauty) and the sublime (awesome beauty), Meltzer and Harris observe that healthier patients are more able to recognize and make emotional contact with both, without relying on social cues or intellectual criteria. They speculate that integrating the joyous and terrifying and unknown qualities of beauty is an emotional achievement that begins with the aesthetic experience of the infant with mother. They further suggest that, contrary to Klein, the aesthetic conflict is present *prior to* paranoid-schizoid and depressive position functioning, and, that it is the apprehension of the dual aspects of beauty that gives birth to paranoid-schizoid functioning: “The psychopathology which we study and allege to treat has its *primary* basis in the flight from the pain of aesthetic conflict” (Meltzer & Harris, 1988, pp. 26-29, emphasis mine). Recognizing that they are on similar psychic terrain with respect to Freud’s essay on transience, Meltzer and Harris differentiate their conceptual framework from Freud’s by emphasizing that “the tragic element in the aesthetic experience resides, not in the transience, but in the enigmatic quality of the object...” (1988, p. 27).

While appreciating the distinction between the anxieties connected with transience and those connected with the enigmatic beauty, I want to emphasize that these anxieties travel well together and are deeply intertwined. Meltzer and Harris are clear that what is distinctive about the apprehension of beauty is the *uncertainty* of the full interior truth of the object. Regarding transience, while mortality is certain in principle, there is also an enigmatic uncertainty as to when, where and how things will end. The apprehension of beauty and aesthetic conflict described by Meltzer and Harris intersect with Freud's discussion of transience and the uncanny (Freud, 1916, 1919) precisely at this nodal point of uncertainty. Taken together, it means that one's lifelong relationship with transience and beauty will be colored by shades of apprehension about what is to come, yet still hidden behind beauty's veil.

Transience and Aesthetic Conflict in *Tosca*

Tosca was one of the first operas to enthrall me when I was a young man. By the customs of the genre, it was brief and to the point: no overture at the beginning, no prolonged death scene at the end. Its no-frill dramatic intensity and action-thriller quality with obvious and clear villains and heroes resonated easily. Perhaps for these sorts of reasons, it is not unusual for aficionados to regard *Tosca* as more lowbrow than highbrow, and perhaps something of guilty pleasure. One well-known critic even demeaned it as a "shabby little shocker" (Kerman, 1988, p. 208). Such points of view notwithstanding, and despite my initial simple reactions fifty years ago, *Tosca* has become increasingly emotionally complex with experience, and its three major arias seem to reflect some of the primary emotional stages of life that impact my patients...and me.

With our conceptual scaffolding in place, we now return more directly to *Tosca*, and consider how the themes of transience, aesthetic conflict, and the apprehension of beauty are at play here from a mature point of view. To begin with, Floria Tosca and Mario Cavaradossi are themselves artists whose very lives are centered in the realm of the aesthetic. Also, as I mentioned earlier, the three major arias, one in each act, concern themselves sequentially with beauty, misfortune, and transience.

In Act I, we first encounter Cavaradossi in a church painting a portrait of Mary Magdalene, modeled on an unknown woman he has seen praying there. With great romantic passion, he contrasts her particular beauty with that of Tosca. While the Sacristan at work in the church is scandalized by the eroticism in the music and poetry of Cavaradossi's aria, the effect on the audience is to suggest that the essence of beauty is both earthly and sacredly sublime. As Cavaradossi takes up his brushes, he sings the aria "*Recondite Armonia*" ["Oh hidden harmony"], a reverie on the mysterious beauty of life and love, and its enigmatic essence:

Oh, hidden harmony
Of contrasting beauties! Floria
Is dark, my love and my passion...

And you, mysterious beauty...
Crowned with blonde locks,
Your eyes are blue
And Tosca's black!

Dissimilar beauties are together blended,
By the mystery of art;
Yet as I paint her portrait, Tosca
My sole thought is of you. (Libretto, p.16)

The music in "*Recondita Armonia*" begins with a lilting seductive harmony played by flutes that give way to a tender romantic background, but gradually builds to an impassioned crescendo suggesting a sensual finish to seduction.

In Act II, Floria Tosca is overcome with despair and horror as she reacts to the ugly terrors Scarpia has revealed in his torture chamber just beyond the civilized ornamentation of his beautiful chambers. She then launches into the second major aria under discussion, “*Vissi d’Arte*” [“I lived for art”], a lament reminiscent of Job. She bemoans the existential unfairness of having to deal with evil, when she has worked so hard for the good in her life and in her art.

I lived for art, I lived for love:
Never did I harm a living creature!...
Whatever misfortunes I encountered
I sought with secret hand to succor...
Ever in pure faith
My prayers rose
In the holy chapels,
Ever in pure faith
I brought flowers to the altars.
In this hour of distress, why,
Why, oh Lord,
Dost thou repay me thus? (Libretto, p. 16)

The music of “*Vissi d’Arte*” is exquisite, conveying shock, confusion, vulnerability, and anger as Tosca tries to apprehend the evil that has revealed itself behind what now appears as the artifice of beauty in life. It is one of the most famous moments in opera, and interestingly, Puccini almost did not include it because he was worried that the intense emotionality would almost bring the drama to a halt, and be such a showstopper, that there would be no way to top it as the opera progressed into the third act.

While Tosca and Cavaradossi are devoted artists whose quest is the sublime and transcendent, Scarpia is a power-mongering moral dwarf in a perverse quest for the low-hanging fruit of power and subjugation. Scarpia represents well the crass forces of philistinism which Meltzer and Harris depict as a psychopathology arising as a defensive retreat from aesthetic conflict (1988, p. 29). In Act II, he unabashedly describes himself

as a hedonistic, sadistic man whose desires are quenched, not from experiencing beauty, but from dominating, destroying, and discarding it:

Of profound love...For myself the violent conquest
Has stronger relish than the soft surrender
I take no delight in sighs or vows
Exchanged at misty lunar dawn
I know not how to draw
Harmony from guitars or horoscopes
From flowers. Nor am I apt at dalliance
Or cooing like the turtle dove. I crave
I pursue the craved thing, sate myself and cast it by... (Libretto p. 12)

Quite pointedly, Puccini does not bestow Scarpia with a grand aria, but rather a vulgar, boastful *arioso* (more melodic than speaking, but not as soaring as an aria) “*Gia mi dicon venal*” [“They say I am venal”] in which he gloats:

Yes, they say that I am venal, but it is not
For money that I will sell myself
To beautiful women. I want other recompense
If I am to betray my oath of office
Already in the past I burned
With passion for the diva.
But tonight I have beheld you
In a new role I had not seen before.
Those tears of yours were lava
To my sense and that fierce hatred
Which your eyes shot at me, only fanned
The fire in my blood... (Libretto p. 15)

Throughout, Puccini skillfully conveys the sinister, menacing quality of Scarpia in the music that stirs around him. He often uses the whole tone scale in which all the tones are the same distance apart, and which includes an augmented fourth (tritone) interval, which, has been known as the *diabolus in musica* (the devil in music) since medieval times. Puccini uses the difficult intervals in this tonality to convey the fear and anxiety that Scarpia arouses when his presence is felt.

The final major aria dealing with earthly and sublime beauty, occurs in Act III with Cavaradossi's "*E lucevan le stelle*" ["And the stars shone"]. This aria is the emotional center of gravity in *Tosca*, and draws together the most profound and complex sentiments in the apprehension of beauty. First, the orchestral score provides an extended six-minute interlude that anticipates the beginning of the aria. In most productions, Cavaradossi is on stage seated in his cell, quietly gazing into the infinite distance, as if in reverie, while the scene gathers force both from the music itself and Cavaradossi's long silence. Puccini's melodic themes here are mournfully mysterious and transcendental. During this interlude, the voice of a shepherd boy can be heard, off-stage in the distance, conveying that, in the silence, Cavaradossi is immersed in remembrance of his younger days as he faces death at dawn. Following this interlude, there is another four-minute buildup as Cavaradossi begins his last letter to Tosca. Finally, he arrives at the crest of the scene, and emerging from his reverie, begins to sing with exquisite feeling:

And the stars shone, the earth was perfumed,
The gate to the garden creaked
And a footstep rustled the sand on the path...
Fragrant, she entered
And fell into my arms...
Oh soft kisses, oh sweet abandon,
As I trembling
Unloosed her veils and disclosed her beauty.
Oh vanished forever is that dream of love,
Led is that hour,
And desperately I die.
And never before have I loved life so much! (Libretto, p. 17)

"*E lucevan le stelle*" is one of the most famous opera arias. Introduced by a sober clarinet solo, it builds slowly into something as expansive as the sky above Cavaradossi as dawn breaks. He finishes this intense meditation bursting into tears. The music along with the lyrics, make it movingly clear that the tears express not only the depth of his

grief as he faces death, but also the wonderment of his experience of innocent beauty in the garden of life.

Three Stages in the Apprehension of Beauty

The three arias just discussed, as well as the three characters of Tosca, Scarpia, and Cavaradossi embody differing developmental positions regarding the apprehension of beauty and the integration of beauty's dual aspects. Floria Tosca, with her child-like impassioned and impulsive nature, illustrates the idealism and optimism of youth with its inevitable encounter with what lurks behind apparent pure beauty. Before Scarpia, the only danger we see her encounter is the threat of Cavaradossi loving another woman. Now, however, she has undergone a total reversal of fortune which shatters her illusions of safety, goodness, and art. Tosca, however sympathetic as a character, represents an incapacity to rise to the occasion of disillusionment through mourning, leaving her with no choice but suicide. Scarpia depicts someone who is also unable to hold in mind the contrast between the sublime and the horrible, and has adapted not by suicide, but by an opportunistic exit into a psychic retreat where he creates a world of perverse, cynical darkness. Only Cavaradossi's character depicts movement toward a full and complex position of integration. He has traveled from idealism and the love of beauty, through the chamber of hidden horrors, and mourned sufficiently to feel a mingling of despair and gratitude. His ability to do so is subtly hinted at in his earliest aria, "*Recondite Armonia*" ["Oh hidden harmony"], when he sings of the hidden harmony of his Mary Magdalene's bright blue gaze and contrasts it with the dark gaze of Tosca. Somehow, even though he himself has also gazed into the maws of hell (arrested, tortured and sentenced to death),

he is still able to make direct contact with the sublime beauty of his life while facing his imminent demise.

As I suggested at the outset, the aesthetic loop between ourselves and certain works of art allows an opera like *Tosca* to reveal different, more profound meanings as time passes and we get older. I would suggest that, for our younger selves, Cavaradossi's "*Recondite Armonia*" captures the excitement of creativity and love, all contextualized by a youthful revolutionary spirit for overturning the old order (symbolized by church and state), in the service of establishing something new and better. The aria captures the period of generativity in adolescence and young adulthood in which, if all goes well, we are fueled by youthful energies, and driven by our hopes, dreams, and ideals. Developmentally, we have broken away from the moorings of parental objects and cultural conventions, and, well aware of their shortcomings, have begun to soar with visions of our own for love, work, and life. I remember well, as will most readers of this essay, the intoxicating elixir of emotions stirred by these new freedoms and possibilities, so beautifully captured in Cavaradossi's aria as his enchantment allows him not only to be captured by beauty, but to recreate it as well in the portrait he is painting.

As life proceeds, however, matters become far more complex. Gradually it becomes clearer that having dreams and actualizing them are entirely different processes. Though freer from our childhood objects and their constrictions, as adults we realize reluctantly that we are still living within a collective world of systems, personal limitations, and other people, most of whom will be marching to their own drummers rather than ours. This can feel hugely disappointing, disillusioning, and frustrating as we are forced to reckon with such obstacles. It has been said that one marker of deepening maturity at this point is the realization the obstacles are not "personal", but rather that the

world is simply going about its business (Spezzano, 1992). This is, of course, consistent with Bion's assumption throughout his writing that (O) is essentially unknowable, indifferent, and impersonal (1965,1970). Nonetheless, is *feels as if* something personally persecutory and unfair is being carried out against us. Such a sensibility may be recognized as a psychic reality to be worked through both within ourselves, and within our clinical work with our patients. For our middle-aged selves, Floria Tosca's aria in Act 2, "*Vissi d'Arte*", vividly captures this encounter with unfairness and the erosion of idealism with all the pressures to compromise one's values to survive the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" (Shakespeare, 1559/1974, p. 1160). Scarpia neatly symbolizes both the presence of an actual person opposing us in our ideals, and the more general sense of larger forces being stacked against us. We can all resonate with Floria Tosca's lament when she exclaims that all she's ever lived for is love and art, as she bemoans her fate in encountering the perverse and ugly in life.

As one can observe from clinical work, it is possible for some to get mired in a swamp of despair and cynicism. As "case examples", consider these inter-related remarks by the Italian poet Leopardi, and the narrator, Lina, in the second of Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan novels, *The Story of a New Name* (2013).

The spectacle of such abundance of life when you first go into this garden lifts your spirits, and that is why you think it is a joyful place. But in truth this life is wretched and unhappy, every garden is like a vast hospital (a place more deplorable than a cemetery), and if these beings feel, or rather, were to feel, surely not being would be better for them than being. (Leopardi, 1837)

"I think beauty is a sham."

"Like the Leopardian garden?"...

“Yes. Like the sea on a calm day. Or like a sunset. Or like the sky at night. It’s like face powder patted on over the horror. If you take it away, we are left alone with our fear”. (Ferrante, 2013, p. 323)

Is it possible to move beyond these sentiments into a more transcendent third stage in the apprehension of beauty? For our aging selves, facing down the uncertain plans of the “executioner”, the entirety of Cavaradossi’s delicate reverie scene and his profound final aria lay out a path for traversing the thickets of disappointment, loss, mourning and transience and emerging in a clearing of gratitude. Only then can the “beauty and horrors of the garden” be integrated so that life’s awesome mysterious beauty can be fully apprehended, and naivety and cynicism be transcended.

Tosca, Cavaradossi, and Scarpia symbolize our own internal conflicting processes, as we work to accept that, to fully encounter the mysterious beauty of life, is to also encounter feelings of smallness, dependence, vulnerability, and uneasiness about what is coming next. If tolerance for this aesthetic conflict collapses, a retreat away from the sublime moves in the direction of the base and sordid dimensions of Scarpia’s world. However, if tolerance for aesthetic conflict is sustained, the sordid is accepted as background, and the sublime is embraced with all its beauty and mystery, as Cavaradossi is able to do just before his tragic end.

Concluding Comments

Tosca is set in the sanctified church of San’Andrea delle Valle, the corrupt Palazzo Farnese, and the dreadful execution site of the Castel Sant’ Angelo, three structures still to be visited today in Rome, the “eternal city” (Tibullus, 1988, Nicassio, 2001). Although *Tosca* was set 200 years ago, and premiered 100 years ago, it has a

timeless quality and a deep resonance for us at this moment in history. Its three locations aptly serve to symbolize the promise of beauty and sanctity in Act I, the encounter with the ugliness and the perverse retreat into gold and power represented by Scarpia's luxurious offices in Act II, and, finally, in Act III, to the reckoning with the dual aspects of the aesthetic conflict on the battlements that overlook the totality of the dialectic of beauty and horror. One might muse that the long history of awe-inspiring cultural beauty, intermingled with centuries of oppressive regimes in Rome, might have provided Puccini and his librettists Illica and Giacosa with a unique attunement to the unknown terrors lurking behind beauty's mask, the prospect of which Meltzer and Harris address as the core anxiety of the aesthetic conflict.

Psychologically, the drama takes place in the psyche, and audience members recognize the descendants of Cavaradossi, Tosca, and Scarpia within themselves and everywhere on the global stage today, even if the characters travel under different names. Equally eternal are the intertwined encounters with love, beauty, religiosity, and oppressive political machination, which begin without overture when we are "thrown into life" (Heidegger, 1927, p. 276) and which will end only when the final curtain drops.

To return to the beginning, an aesthetic loop develops between one's early experiences of a work of art, and one's deepening understanding of the work over a lifetime. For me, the existential relevance of *Tosca*, as it relates to transience and the apprehension of beauty is increasingly poignant with the passage of time. It brings to mind a Zen story I first heard from an old man when I was still a boy:

A man traveling across a field encountered a tiger. He fled, the tiger came after him. Coming to a precipice, he caught hold of the root of a wild vine and swung himself down over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above. Trembling, the

man looked down to where, far below, another tiger was waiting to eat him. Only the vine sustained him. Two mice, one white and one black, little by little started to gnaw away at the vine. The man saw a luscious strawberry near him. Grasping the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other. How sweet it tasted. (Reps, 1958, pp. 22-23).

This, then, is the story of the Tosca and Cavaradossi within each of us. As we are all poised fearfully between Scarpia's tigers, let us also fully apprehend the beauty of the strawberries as best we can.

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