

Mediations on Emergent Occasions

Mad Men, Donald Draper and Frank O'Hara

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Frank O'Hara's 1957 poetry collection, *Meditations in an Emergency*, features in season two of *Mad Men* (2008) as a talismanic phrase and object. Pressed into service as Matthew Weiner's valentine to his returning viewers, the circulation and citation of the book across the season, through different diegetic and extradiegetic levels, aligns poetry, advertising and quality serial television drama as textual modes intent, above all, on creating attachment through feeling. In particular, Weiner uses *Meditations* as a way of foregrounding the show's appeal (in both senses) to a skilful, faithful viewer or reader. The intimate 'I/you' of lyric address is offered as cognate with the kind of identification and ongoing connection a show like *Mad Men* solicits and requires. O'Hara's *Meditations* is a crucial link in a series of metonymic relays, chain effects and affects, which underwrite *Mad Men*'s citational poetics to assert its own cultural authority, and the mediating power of television itself.

Within the diegesis of season two, there are two copies of *Meditations*, the one that catches Don's eye in a bar at lunchtime, and the one he subsequently purchases and gives away. We know Don has purchased O'Hara's book after lunch when we see

it later that afternoon in his Madison Avenue office. After that sighting, *Meditations* travels fifty kilometres north with Don into the lonely suburban night of his marital home in Ossining, a commuter town in Westchester, New York, known mainly as the location of the maximum security prison, Sing Sing. From Ossining, Don's copy of O'Hara's book, inscribed to an unknown 'you' ('Made me think of you—D'), is posted to an undisclosed location. The mystery of its destination will not be solved until the penultimate episode of the season (episode 12, 'The Mountain King') when Don makes the same journey in person to San Pedro, the port district of Los Angeles, where he takes the book from the shelf in Anna Draper's bookcase. Anna Draper is the widow of the man whose name Don stole in the Korean War. She is his secret confidante and partner in deception, and this is the house he bought her in return for her collusion. When Don asks her if she has read *Meditations*, her reply mirrors his inscription: 'It reminded me of New York, and it made me worry about you.'

This structure of reciprocity is paired in turn with Anna's reading of Don's tarot cards. Her advice to him, 'The only thing keeping you from being happy is the belief that you are alone', could be an O'Hara line. The episode closes with Don's self-baptism: as he walks into the vast Pacific and ducks under a wave, we hear the lines of the country gospel tune 'Cup of Loneliness', sung by George Jones, 'called out of darkness/a new life to begin', and know that he will resurface. 'Cup of Loneliness' was the title track of Jones' Musicor release of 1967 but had appeared earlier on his first Mercury album, *Country Church Time* (1958). *Cup of Loneliness* is also the name of the multi-disc compilation of Jones' Mercury years, released in 1994, which may have been what brought this track to the attention of Weiner or his researchers. As a long-time fan of George Jones, this song was as immediately recognisable and resonant as the first appearance of *Meditations in an Emergency* at the beginning of the season. More broadly, 'Cup of Loneliness' acts as a material and auditory bridge between then and now, a sign of the show's dual temporality much like O'Hara's *Meditations*. The choice of Jones, and this song in particular, is implicitly linked to Don/Dick's traumatic rural childhood, as represented in flashback in 'The Hobo Code' (season one, episode 8), as well as the ambivalent romance of itinerancy represented there and in 'The Jet Set' (season one, episode 11) where Don sojourns among footloose aristocrats reading Faulkner before finding his way to Anna and *Meditations*.¹

At the end of episode 12, it seems that *Meditations* has played its part. Don returns to Madison Avenue, and to Betty in Ossining, in the next and final episode of season two. The book stays behind in San Pedro (where O'Hara was unhappily stationed on the naval base) but continues to resonate extradiegetically as the *title* of season two's finale: 'Meditations in an Emergency' by Matthew Weiner. Now linked to a series of historical and narrative *emergencies* (the Cuban Missile Crisis, the transatlantic takeover of the agency and Betty's pregnancy), the final episode distributes creative agency among its masculine authorial trinity: O'Hara, Draper and Weiner. The persuasive power of Don's eloquence and his business acumen is affirmed at work ('I sell products not advertising') and also at home (Betty reads Don's love letter, decides to reconcile and keep the baby). Meanwhile, back at the office, Peggy tells Pete, 'I had your baby and I gave it away.' As the song goes:

Did you ever have them laugh at you
and say it was a fake?...
Ah my friends 'tis bittersweet
while here on earthly sod
It's the end of the season, not the end of the world.

Season two is intertextually and metatextually rich, as befits its position in the show's serial structure; it is explicitly interested in dramatising and commenting on issues of textual generation and genealogy, transmission and reception including, implicitly, the reception of the show itself, and the question of its continuance. What does the show want from its audience and vice versa? What do mad (that is, creative) men want and at what or whose cost? How do aesthetics and commerce, poetry and advertising, come together in the selling of (this) product? What is the nature of attachment—to a text or genre, an image or phrase; to the past, oneself ('I') and others ('you')?

Let's go back to the (second) beginning. In episode 1 of the second season, 'For Those Who Think Young', set on Valentine's Day 1962, Don notices a man reading in a bar at lunchtime. This 'chance' encounter follows an insurance physical. At thirty-six, Don is facing an emergency of sorts. He has just been prescribed blood pressure medication and told to slow down. When Don asks the stranger about the book, he deadpans: 'I don't think you'd like it.' Apparently immune to Don's charms (Jon Hamm looks like Gregory Peck in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* or even

Gentleman's Agreement), the bearded O'Hara reader rebuffs Don's interest. This first appearance of O'Hara's *Meditations in an Emergency* initiates a coded face-off between two visually distinct men over a singular avant-garde text in plain covers, a cheap Grove Press paperback, in a midtown Manhattan bar. The setting is nondescript, generic, but its valency changes when we learn that O'Hara himself frequented it when he worked at the Museum of Modern Art on West 53rd Street. This is not just any day, any bar, any book: *Meditations* is a sign for Don and the show of which he is the star that the way forward in this emergency will depend on being alert to unexpected encounters and contingent intimacies.

This foundational scene has generated a great deal of commentary, especially across the blogosphere, about *Mad Men* and its poetics of redaction. As a show about retelling and representing the past, about historically, textually and culturally mediated preferences and choices, *Mad Men* has in turn generated a prolific secondary market of paid and unpaid labour devoted to retelling and redacting (often very freely) each new instalment. On his blog *Samizdat*, 'Archambeau' (poet-professor Robert Archambeau),² offers one of the most polished and incisive redactions:

'Is it good?' Don asks the arty, slightly younger guy, as he eyes up the book in his hand—Frank O'Hara's *Meditations in an Emergency*. Arty guy looks back, with the aloofness arty types reserve for those who visibly make more money than they do. 'I don't think you'd like it,' he says. Don tries to salvage the conversation by saying that reading while having lunch makes you feel like you're getting something done. 'That's what it's all about, isn't it,' says Mr Downtown book-guy, with an ironic, even slightly sneering, air, 'getting things done.' Ah, the liberal arts graduate, and his compensatory condescension—it's like looking in a mirror, isn't it? But not for Don. It bothers Don. It's an attack on his sense of himself as creative genius, a role he plays so very well in his own dojo up on Madison Ave. It makes him feel like a mere utilitarian, and he treasures the sense of himself as belonging to the part of the ad agency that's above mere business, about which he is, in his way, as snobbish as the O'Hara reader at the bar.³

'O'Hara reader' thinks Don is too straight to appreciate O'Hara but the show's audience knows better, especially that part of it which must be considerable, already

familiar with both O'Hara and Don. Of course, *Mad Men* itself has quickly joined O'Hara's poetry as a staple of liberal arts curricula, the main source of the demand that has kept O'Hara's work more or less continuously in print since his death. *Mad Men* implicitly announces its pedagogical intentions, a desire borne out by the sudden spike in sales after *Meditations* made its debut appearance on the show. According to the blog, *Freakonomics*, in a piece called 'Publishers: Get Your Books In Don Draper's Hands': 'I clicked over to Amazon to check the book's sales rank a few minutes after Draper read the book. A rather mediocre No. 15,565. This morning, at 8:30 a.m., the book was ranked No. 161.'⁴ I am not suggesting that this was a planned effect, or even a desired outcome, although I'm sure a welcome one. The mutually beneficial liaison of Don Draper and Frank O'Hara, AMC and the O'Hara estate, offers a model of ramifying and reciprocal reward for all parties, including the show's fans, which owes more to curatorial disposition than commercial product placement.

Archambeau's retelling and translation of the televisual text is framed as the result of watching the show again 'as part of my ramp-up to tonight's fourth season opener'. Rereading, perhaps even rewriting, is a desired response to a series like *Mad Men*, and a practice variously thematised within the show. From a commercial standpoint, it is key to the desire to own the series on DVD, as well as the willingness to stay with the show from start to finish. In Archambeau's case his long, literary blog entry (only excerpted here) shares the pleasure of preparing for the new season, immersing himself in the text's past in order to be maximally receptive to its future, and the intermedial position of the show and longform television in general. This model of textual apprehension attributes value both to the object of this repeated attention—the text is worth it, and will repay with interest the time and thought invested in it—and to the practice of rereading as a way of repossessing the text across time, forwards and backwards. Likewise, formally redacting and commenting on the show, or simply discussing it, or thinking about it, are ways of adding value and increasing attachment.

Don is not only the chief object of our attention, he is also the show's chief reader: a quick, intuitive study who prides himself on being hard to read; a chancer and passer, an actor, always cruising, alert to opportunity, always on guard and on the make. Don's 'real' name, Dick Whitman, suggests his figurative connection to both Walt Whitman and Dick Whittington. On the other hand, the fact that his

adopted name, 'Donald Draper', is the name of a corpse, threatens to make Don a kind of zombie. Redaction and reanimation cut both ways: life and death. Even when disaster is averted, the melancholy never goes away. The show associates Don Draper/Dick Whitman with both Whitman and O'Hara, icons of anti-elitist American poetic originality, upward mobility and cross-over appeal (O'Hara went to Harvard on the GI bill). They figure as celebrants of worldly, cosmopolitan attentiveness whose aesthetic labour is aligned with an unabashed homoerotic attachment to the sweat of the brow. Like Whitman's 'democratic vistas', 'Meditations in an Emergency', the title poem of O'Hara's book, is an example of, and commentary on, 'the ecstasy of always bursting forth!' in 'boundless love': 'It's my duty to be attentive, I am needed by things as the sky must be above the earth.'⁵ This kind of poetry, this kind of poet, operates in a complex middle ground (midtown) of everyday sophistication, style and self-consciousness on the fly, hallmarks of both advertising and television at their best. If these poetic associations and citations within *Mad Men* significantly shape our reading of Don Draper and add to his cultural capital, they just as importantly suggest the innovative middle ground occupied by *Mad Men* and its auteur, Matthew Weiner. As original American TV drama, the first such show to be commissioned and broadcast by a basic cable channel, AMC, *Mad Men* is produced in the cinematic mode and style associated with HBO's 'motion picture television'. In that sense, the much-awarded *Mad Men* passes as (or continuously cites) the *modus operandi* of premium cable, and in so doing alters the horizon of television.

Mad Men is on the side of the charismatic passer, and passing as experimental *poesis* and performance. We see this in patrilineal epitome in 'Flight 1' (season two, episode 2) when Betty calls Bobby a 'liar' after he takes credit for a drawing he has traced. Don defends his son with the simple statement: 'That's what we do.' In context, Don's immediate reference is the firm's art department, but of course the fine line between tracing and copying, and the relation between original and copy, is a distinction critical not just for Don but for the whole show and its negotiation of fact and fiction in the framework of historical redaction. Jon Hamm's voice-over reading of the last section of O'Hara's 'Mayakovsky', the last poem in *Meditations*, at the end of the previous episode is a particularly interesting case in point. O'Hara's words in Don's mouth, in his head and ours, is a rhetorical *prosopopoeia*, a

reanimation of a dead man associated here with the everyday intimacy of reading, thinking, writing, posting a letter and, implicitly, watching television. The first episode of the new season closes with yet another demonstration of the art of tracing, passing (ventriloquism) and passing on (the posted, inscribed copy of O'Hara's book) as gift and practice. That we do not know the book's destination or to whom Don has inscribed it, 'Made me think of you—D', only enlarges its affective reach, capitalising on the indeterminacy and openness of lyric's characteristic I/you mode of address in a gesture that seems to reach through the screen.⁶

O'Hara was an iconic figure of metropolitan postmodernity in and for the Manhattan art and poetry scenes from the late 1950s, but exponentially so from the time of his accidental death in 1966. He saw himself as bringing the homoerotic, epic, democratic legacy of Whitman into contact with European modernist experiment and the object-world of everyday experience in the great metropolis of New York. Through his work at the Museum of Modern Art, where he rose rapidly from the ticket counter to a senior curatorial position, and through his gift for friendship and collaboration, especially with visual artists, O'Hara became synonymous with experimental exchanges and cross-subsidisations between poetry, everyday life and material culture and the high-end celebrity world of the New York art scene. The particular link in O'Hara's writing between lyric poetry and advertising as persuasive minimalist modes of expression and suggestion, intent on the production of person to person positive affect and object-cathexis, and on the relations between verbal and visual technologies, make him and the self-made Draper an intriguing pairing, designed to be recognised and meditated upon by a significant part of the show's audience. O'Hara's process-oriented poetics, replete with high and pop culture references, the names of people and products (as in 'Having a Coke with you'), offers the pleasure of melancholy lite (*tristesse*) and the camp performance of intimacy.

In the structure of season two, O'Hara's book is aligned with the negotiation of subjectivity in time, and the ongoing presence of the past as an engine for the production of nostalgia. The title of this episode, 'For Those Who Think Young', refers to a well-known Pepsi slogan in use in the early sixties ('now It's Pepsi—for those who think young'; 'Thinking young is a state of mind. Anyone can join in.'), reprised by Britney Spears in a series of retro commercials in 2002. In the show's

melancholy context, this upbeat slogan seems to echo the popular aphorism, 'Those whom the gods love die young', recycled from Heroditus by Byron with homoerotic emphasis in *Don Juan* canto IV, stanza 12: "'Whom the gods love die young", was said of yore'. Byron was thirty-six when he died, the same age as Don in this episode. Don cuts an undeniably Byronic figure, while O'Hara's Byronic stylings are thematised in his poems and frequently adduced by his readers. O'Hara, who died at forty from injuries sustained in a freak car accident on Fire Island (no cars allowed), and Dick Whitman (as distinct from the 'real' Don Draper) are exactly the same age. The interpolation of O'Hara's *Meditations* into the *mise-en-scène* and narrative structure of season two, as an object unexpectedly and instinctively cathected by Don, secures the link between the Byronic libertine (who 'thinks young') and the *topos* of early death. This elegiac apprehension of serial pleasure and loss, everywhere in *Meditations*, cannot fail to read retrospectively as a prolepsis of O'Hara's own approaching death and the mourning it unleashed. As Geoff Ward remarks: 'As with *Don Juan*, where enjoyment of the picaresque bounce and chatter begins to cede to a more somber tone which, once heard, resounds everywhere, so the poetry of Frank O'Hara is often to do with varieties of death.'⁷ This triangulation of Don Draper, O'Hara, and Byron through the Pepsi slogan, 'For those who think young', and the diegetic introduction of *Meditations* through the figure of an anonymous reader in a bar, is exactly the kind of allusive game beloved of *Mad Men's* writer-director-producer, Matthew Weiner, and many of the show's fans.

In the period mimesis of *Mad Men*, the placement and narrativisation of *Meditations* knowingly inscribes the double temporality of authors and readers at the diegetic level, inviting us to think about the show as an aesthetic text and ourselves as author-readers, like Don and Bobby, like Matthew Weiner and Frank O'Hara. In the show's chronology O'Hara is a rising star in the poetry and art worlds, a charismatic, coterie figure, but in the time of the show's production and transmission, O'Hara's literary reputation is indissoluble from his premature death. The copy of *Meditations* in *Mad Men* thus functions nostalgically and proleptically: it signals the continuation of death, loss and abandonment in season two, and the asymptotic relation between the temporality of the text (what the text ought to know or remember according to its own chronology) and the time of its reception (what it is possible for the audience to know at any given point). According to

Weiner's DVD commentary, although he might have been expected to encounter O'Hara at college (he studied English at Wesleyan), as it happened he did not. His first meeting with O'Hara's poetry, so the story goes, was belated and serendipitous. It was engineered by his wife who took him to 'Manhattan Noon', an exhibition of street photography by Gus Powell at the Museum of the City of New York, inspired by O'Hara's *Lunch Poems* (1964). The show was on display from 15 December 2007 through to 18 May 2008. Season two, featuring O'Hara's *Meditations in an Emergency* (rather than *Lunch Poems*, which would have broken the unities of time and place), went to air on 27 July 2008.⁸ The tight timing bespeaks the 'emergency' set in train by Weiner's excitement at discovering O'Hara, an excitement that can only have increased exponentially as he and his team came to realise the exfoliating potential of this discovery for season two. It is impossible to trace the exact ratio of authorial control and serendipity in the pairing of Don Draper and O'Hara's book. If Weiner's story is true, then the introduction of O'Hara's book in season two, and the use of *Meditations* as a crucial device in the textual negotiation of Don's secrets and the enigma of his interiority, must be a late renovation and complication of the link to Walt Whitman already established by the choice of the original name, Dick Whitman, and its association with the subtle signing of the hobo diaspora, into which the young Dick is initiated in 'The Hobo Code' (season one, episode 8, first aired 6 September 2007).

In the finale of season one, set on Thanksgiving, Don learns of his brother Adam's suicide, after he has spurned him and paid him to go away. Don's new lover, Rachel, the Jewish department store heiress, has rejected him and left the country. Peggy gives up her newborn baby. Don wows everybody with his family slide show presentation for Kodak, an ironic but nonetheless affecting allegory of the show's success in recuperating the past as a reservoir of pathos. Moved by his own rhetoric, Don returns home to find Betty and the children gone. Against this background, *Meditations* signals Don's interest in a different kind of object and a new brand (O'Hara), trying out something he has been told he won't like. O'Hara's witty title was itself a joky *détournement* of John Donne's *Meditations Upon Emergent Occasions*, casting himself as a latter day metaphysical with a swipe at the bathos of the reigning 'confessional' poets, Robert Lowell et al. Warned that he must slow down, Don responds to O'Hara's figuration of poetry and the book as a different kind

of risk management (insurance), recuperating the passing sensations of everyday life as aesthetic value. O'Hara's poetry, as Wayne Koestenbaum writes, is 'valedictory'; he 'uses contemporary melancholy to renew the springs of prior artifacts':

Like Warhol's professed love of easy art (or art that was easy to make), O'Hara's love of easeful production stood in ironic contrast to the uneasy intensity that electrifies his work and complicates its every emotional posture, threading melancholy and ambivalence and the threat of self-loss into the most apparently insouciant exclamations.⁹

We've seen Don take a professional interest in popular mid-century fiction in season one, reading *Exodus* and *The Best of Everything* ('This is fascinating', he tells Betty).¹⁰ We've also witnessed Don's ambivalent discomfort with the bohemian downtown scene of his sometime girlfriend, Midge Daniels. When she takes him to a Beat reading in the Village he feels out of place and quickly leaves: 'I should go. Too much art for me.' But O'Hara's slim book with its elegantly plain cover and smart title (like an advertising hook-line) is something quite different. Don's acquisition of *Meditations* is implicitly linked to the theory of advertising in which he schools Peggy in the same episode: 'You feeling something, that's what sells.' Told that O'Hara is not for him, Don wants it. Back at the office, his purchase turns out to be prescient (how about that!): Don is warned that the agency needs 'young talent' to remain competitive. After interviewing and hiring two 'young creatures', both named 'Smith', aged twenty-four and twenty-five, and looking at their 'book', Don turns to *Meditations* again as prophylaxis against the threat of being or feeling past it. Through O'Hara's Grove Press volume, Don acts out some tropism towards its author and contents, as well as the alluring paradox of its title, *Meditations in an Emergency*. Brief and intense, playful and serious, the camp charm and breezy cosmopolitanism of O'Hara's poems and his authorial persona, combine the rush of Manhattan life and commerce with the seductive intimacy of lyric address. Intriguingly, Weiner also thought about what kind of poet and poem might be associated with Betty but this never makes it into the show. That privilege is reserved for Don alone. Bruce Handy writes in *Vanity Fair*:

Before shooting began on the second season, during which Betty would finally confront Don about his infidelities and throw him out of the house,

Weiner suggested the actress read 'Ariel', the poem by Sylvia Plath—an abstract howl of female rage and despair. 'It confused me and freaked me out,' Jones said. Not knowing the coming plotlines (Weiner may not have, either, at that point), she assumed this was his way of telling her Betty would be sticking her head in an oven for the season finale.¹¹

Though Don's hook-up with O'Hara's book is staged as serendipitous and timely, their literary liaison is, of course, thoroughly orchestrated by Weiner. The son of a haberdasher (a draper), Frank O'Hara secured his upward mobility and advanced his erotic interests by joining the navy. Dick Whitman escapes his brutal, impoverished early life by joining the army and, when the opportunity arises, he assumes the identity of his dead commanding officer, Donald Draper. Even more strikingly, Frank O'Hara's younger sister Maureen, executrix of the O'Hara estate, married one of the original *Mad Men*, Walter Granville-Smith, who worked for Young & Rubicam, the midtown New York firm on which the fictional Sterling Cooper is based.¹² In the aftermath of O'Hara's sudden death, Maureen and other O'Hara intimates began to collect Frank's infamously scattered, ephemeral and disorganised manuscript papers and out of print publications. According to Brad Gooch's biography, *City Poet: The Life and Times of Frank O'Hara*, 'Maureen O'Hara arranged for Kenneth Koch and Bill Berkson to use the photocopying machines at her husband's office in the Young & Rubicam advertising firm in midtown' after hours.¹³ The first, fairly quickly put together *Collected Poems* came out with Knopf in 1971, a direct product of those photocopying sessions, but one of the first products of the posthumous career of O'Hara and his poems, inevitably marketed and read through the lens of untimely death and posthumous reputation, was a reissued edition of *Meditations in an Emergency* in 1967.

The story of using the photocopier at Young & Rubicam to copy O'Hara's originals is told on the last page of Gooch's biography, the first print source to which a researcher on O'Hara would turn. Just as Gooch's book thanks 'Maureen O'Hara Granville-Smith, Administrator of the Estate of Frank O'Hara', for permission to quote from the unpublished works of O'Hara, so the use of O'Hara's work in *Mad Men* would have required Maureen's knowledge and permission. In Bruce Handy's *Vanity Fair* interview, Weiner indicates some level of personal acquaintance with Maureen and notes with pride that she is a fan of the show and that she told him

Frank would have liked it too. In the logic of the episode and the season, the introduction of O'Hara's slim volume is linked to the landing of the giant photocopier in the Sterling Cooper office. An accident? I don't think so. The copier is metonymically linked to the fungible status of the women who man it and their secretarial labour: Peggy, having given away her baby, and uneasily transitioning to junior copywriter, is made to share an office with it. Uncannily and serendipitously, the backstory to the posthumous production of 'O'Hara' as iconic New York literary figure, who 'thought young' and died young, metonymically links the photocopier at 'Sterling Cooper' to the photocopier at Young & Rubicam, and thus to O'Hara's literary estate.

In closing I want to return to the most overt formal doubling of Don Draper and Frank O'Hara, the moment when O'Hara's poetry enters the text of *Mad Men* through Don's voiceover reading of the fourth and last section of 'Mayakovsky', the last poem of *Meditations*:

Now I am quietly waiting for
the catastrophe of my personality
to seem beautiful again,
and interesting, and modern.

The country is grey and
brown and white in trees,
snows and skies of laughter
always diminishing, less funny
not just darker, not just grey.

It may be the coldest day of
the year, what does he think of
that? I mean, what do I? And if I do,
perhaps I am myself again.¹⁴

These final lines of 'Mayakovsky', and also of *Meditations*, enunciated in Don's velvety tones, close the episode as the book itself is consigned to someone else, in the future. This metonymic chain of appearances and disappearances underlines the unexpected connection between Don, as the charismatic centre of *Mad Men's* world and our experience of the show, and the most iconic personality of the New York

School poets, one of the most public homosexuals of his day. Hamm's mellifluous reading is 'beautiful' and 'poetic', but his resonant, plush voice and carefully modulated phrasing is also straightening in various ways and could not be further from the rapid-fire, talky, throwaway style of O'Hara's nervy delivery. Swelling music adds another plangent layer as the camera moves up and out to frame Don and the moonlit suburban street in a distant, melancholy spotlight. It has the retro look and feel of a 1950s Sinatra album. The O'Hara passed off by *Mad Men* and Don is in many ways the antithesis of the iconoclastic wit who writes, earlier in the same poem:

Words! Be
sick as I am sick, swoon,
roll back your eyes, a pool,
and I'll stare down
at my wounded beauty
which at best is only a talent
for poetry.¹⁵

Set on and around Valentine's Day, 1962, when *Meditations* was out of print and O'Hara had ascended to a curatorial position at MOMA, 'For Those Who Think Young' aligns Draper's credo, that advertising is at its most successful when it engenders 'feeling', with O'Hara's championing of poetry as an anacletic charm, a performance of personality for another, disclosing nothing more of its split subject ('what does he think of/that? I mean, what do I?') than the effect of being 'beautiful again,/and interesting, and modern'. Weiner's knowing use of O'Hara's book as an object suggests an 'it narrative', a popular eighteenth-century genre well-suited to the metropolitan textual encounter of O'Hara and the pseudonymous 'Donald Draper', poetry and advertising, as twin avatars of desire and mediation, differently motivated but equally opportunistic. The book's movement allegorises the show's broader staging of the complexities of masculine identity and identification as textually and historically mediated: a matter of production and reproduction, seriality and transmission, seduction and *poesis*.

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—NOTES

¹ When I watched the episode again, with hindsight, I thought of Jones' self-penned 'Seasons of my Heart' and 'She Thinks I Still Care', which both date from around this time, and of '(We're not) the Jet Set', the George Jones and Tammy Wynette duet released on their album, *We're Gonna Hold On*, in 1973. The narrative of season 2, episode 11, 'The Jet Set', when Don goes AWOL, is loosely based on the dream sequence from Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, its dissolution signalled by Don's telephone call to an unknown woman at the end of the episode. The next episode, 'In the Hall of the Mountain King', was named for Grieg's popular Opus 46, originally written to accompany the dream in *Peer Gynt*. At the beginning of the episode Don steps off a bus in San Pedro and, as he turns into the front yard of an unknown house, Grieg's music crosses into the diegesis, played by a piano student inside Anna Draper's house.

² 'Tenured Radical', editor of the internationalist experimental poetry journal, *Samizdat*, 1998–2004, <samizdateditions.com>.

³ Robert Archambeau, 'Mad Men's Meditations in an Emergency: Don Draper Reads Frank O'Hara', *Samizdat*, 25 July 2010, <<http://samizdatblog.blogspot.com.au/2010/07/mad-men-s-meditations-in-emergency-don.html>>.

⁴ *Freakonomics*, 28 July 2008, <<http://www.freakonomics.com/2008/07/28/publishers-get-your-books-in-don-drapers-hands/>>

⁵ Frank O'Hara, 'Meditations in an Emergency' in *Meditations in an Emergency*, Grove Press, New York, 1957, p. 39.

⁶ On this point see Amanda Jane Graham, 'Conclusion/ "Made me think of you": Borrowing Books from Don Draper's Library', *Invisible Culture* no. 17, 2011, <ivc.lib.rochester.edu>.

⁷ Geoff Ward, *Statutes of Liberty: The New York School of Poets*, 2nd edn, Palgrave, New York, 1991, p. 4.

⁸ Famously scrupulous in its attention to historical detail, *Mad Men* does take aesthetically motivated liberties. Although *Lunch Poems* was a fitting introduction for Weiner, *Meditations* is the better fit, historically and intertextually. Strictly speaking, *Meditations* is itself somewhat anachronistic in the show's temporality. Published by Barney Rosset's Grove Press in 1957 in an edition of 900, *Meditations* was O'Hara's first full-length volume (fifty-four pages) to be published by a commercial press. Nonetheless Grove still behaved somewhat like a coterie small press, issuing a limited edition of fifteen signed copies with a frontispiece by O'Hara's close friend, the painter Grace Hartigan. By 1962, when Don acquires it (we do not see how), it was sold out, a rarity on the second-hand market.

⁹ Wayne Koestenbaum, "'Oh! Kangaroos, Sequins, Chocolate Sodas!': Frank O'Hara's Excitement', *American Poet*, no. 39, Fall 2010, <<http://www.poets.org>>.

¹⁰ 'Don Draper's *Mad Men* Bookshelf' helpfully tracks the appearance of various books in the show and notes the resemblance between various plot elements in *Mad Men* and such novels-into-films as *The Best of Everything* and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, <www.vulture.com/2008/07/don_drapers_mad_men_bookshelf.html>.

¹¹ Bruce Handy, 'Don and Betty's Paradise Lost', *Vanity Fair*, September 2009, <<http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2009/09/mad-men200909>>.

¹² Don Draper's character is said to be partly based on Draper Daniels, a legendary Chicago ad man whose 1983 memoir, *Giants, Pygmies and other Advertising People*, must have been another boon for Weiner and the show's researchers.

¹³ Brad Gooch, *City Poet: The Life and Times of Frank O'Hara*, Knopf, New York, 1993, p. 470.

¹⁴ Frank O'Hara, 'Mayakovsky', 4, *Meditations in an Emergency*, Grove Press, New York, 1957, pp. 51–2.

¹⁵ O' Hara, 'Mayakovsky', 2.