

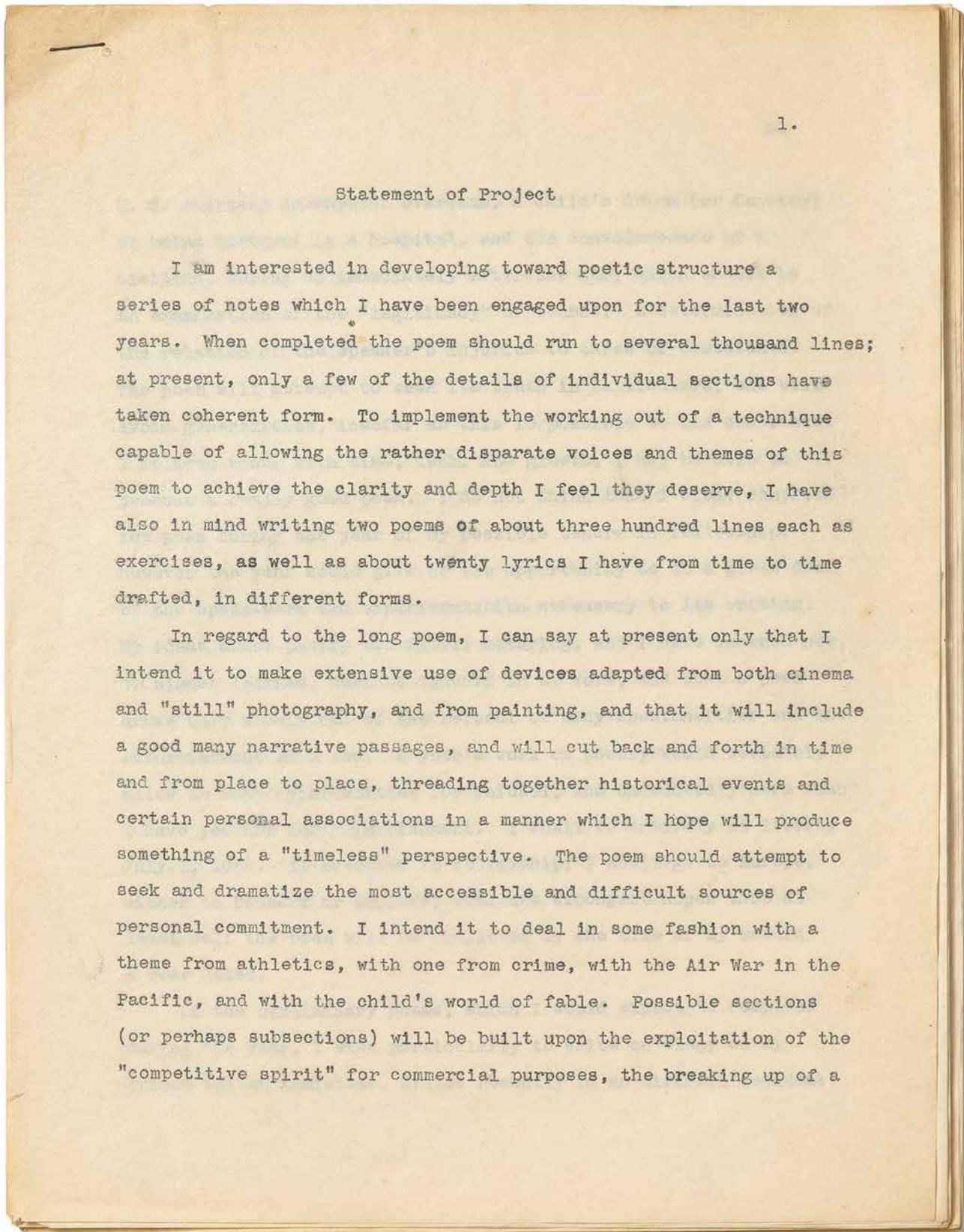


## James Dickey

### *[Typed Manuscript] Statement of Project in Three Parts*

1953 or 1954

\$4800



## The Anniversary

She is who,  
Aligned to joy,  
A candle's blue  
And quiet alloy,  
Took me as wonder  
Far into summer,  
Allayed the ear  
Come down through fear,  
Broke clear as hazard  
And perisht hard  
Against the breast  
The sun not help  
Nor moon destroy,  
Left whole the beast  
And bled the boy.

By lights and signs  
Beneath the arch  
And breach of loins  
We lay from other  
And coined a stitch  
To lace the river  
An inch from sight,  
And soaring brother  
From that odd night.  
Warm in such braces,

Typed Manuscript Unsigned. Typed rectos only, ribbon copy, stapled together in upper left corner. 24 leaves as follows: "Statement of Project," 3 leaves.; "Life," 3 leaves; "Poems," 18 leaves. An interesting manuscript, a typed application likely for a *Sewanee Review* fellowship, prepared in 1953 or 1954 while Dickey was teaching English at Rice University. The manuscript is divided into three parts with the first being a three-page proposal outlining his poetic intentions and the practical implications of what a fellowship would mean to his work. It is immediately clear that he is striving for new ways of expressing himself through poetry: "[I] will cut back and forth in time and from place to place, threading together historical events and certain personal associations in a matter which I hope will produce something of a 'timeless' perspective." Furthering the exploration of these ideas will be greatly assisted by the fellowship: "My ideas about poetry are slowly maturing, and I have learned now, or almost learned, what to discard in my work, and that a poem grows very slowly out of the refusal of many spontaneities and the refurbishment of a few."

The second part of the manuscript includes a three-page biography and bibliography. Dickey describes his upbringing in Florida and Atlanta, his time as an Air Force pilot during World War II, and his education and initial attempts at publication including the completed novel "now under consideration by a publisher" and another partly finished. The bibliography lists three magazines that have published his poetry and two others pending, including *The Quarterly Review of Literature* to which he lists three poems that were never published. The third and final part contains three poem typescripts: "The Anniversary," published in *Poetry* 82 (June 1953); "The Angel of the Maze," that was later published in *Poetry* 86 (June 1955); and "Two Related Poems – for my son," which appear not to have been published.

A wonderful manuscript from the early days of Dickey's literary career when he was an aspiring still struggling to develop his poetic voice. [BTC#413029]

## Life

I was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1924, and, with the exception of a comparatively short period in St. Petersburg, Florida, grew up there. I was educated in the public schools of Atlanta, or rather those just north of it, in the small town of Buckhead, now more properly a suburb. I attended North Fulton High School, where my principal interest was athletics, and Darlington Preparatory School, in Rome, Georgia. I was a fair athlete in high school, though not much of a student, and was given a football scholarship to Clemson A. and M. at the end of my year at Darlington. I remained at Clemson only four months, at the end of that time volunteering into the service.

I served in the Air Force for four years, during which time I flew a variety of types of aircraft, but principally night-fighters (P-70's and P-61's). I participated in most of the campaigns of the Southwest and Western Pacific areas, flying two consecutive tours of duty there, the first in New Guinea, Borneo, and the Southern Phillipines, the second in (or over) the Northern Phillipines, Formosa, the China coast, and Okinawa. Immediately before the termination of the first tour, my best friend was captured and beheaded by the Japanese. He had been a student of English literature at (I think) Boston College, and it was through him that I first became interested in systematic reading.

When I returned to the United States and was mustered out in the winter of 1946, I had no clear idea as to what I wished to do.

Publications

The Sewanee Review, Spring, 1951

The Shark at the Window

Poetry: a magazine of verse, October, 1951

Of Holy War

Poetry: a magazine of verse, June, 1953

The Child In Armor

The Anniversary

(Pending)

The Quarterly Review of Literature

Orpheus

The Sea Sacrifice

For The Iron Cross

The Sewanee Review

The Ground of Killing

# The Angel of the Maze

## I

### The Maze

At mid-morning her wheel-chair seems to rock  
Softly, plaited and varnished, free  
Of the light held thick with clearness  
Under the sill. The lawn of ivy rustles.  
As he sits and reads, hand on wicker table,  
Light passing over his wrist and sleeve  
And fingers composedly trembling  
As if raised, not sure, nor yet in appeal  
From an animal partially withdrawn,  
Ivy moving together in one heaped, gently  
Flaking sound, an angel comes to pay  
Him for his wife. He knows with what  
Inflections the spirit relievedly smiles  
Through the braced shuttle of the blind  
Hung with its side-faced and deepening coin.  
He feels his palm glance into the small  
Cambricked light, and the other burns off,  
Not seen, past the window: the stripes turn  
For one closed furious shock of sun, black,  
Or solid light, and behind them something runs,  
Pattering rapidly over the ivy leaves,  
Then stands.

In the Two Related Poems

Falters, core on such -for my son-

That when I summon, the dust

I

Of the study assemblies

My ear, floating up

As it rocks in light, passes somewhere

You in your own form, set

To silence as to dark,

Constant, yet gone before

The rise of the blinding parable

Is grieved to brim

Its syllables into form.

Unshaken, as the brain of a stone angel

You that I note

And suffer momentarily

In sullen and delicate weight

Of artlessness, may bear

Inward that image shaken

Only upon the soundless burst

Of hunger willing Eden

Not leafless, but restored

Field of torches, releasing them