

Public Abstract

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This dissertation is mostly a collection of poems written about the photographer Edward Weston. They are persona poems, meant to be read as if in his own voice, so that the reader can imagine what he might have thought and felt about some of his life experiences. The first two sections deal with different times in his life where he struggled as a person and artist. The first, "His Negatives of Dusk," takes place after he had broken off a relationship with Tina Modotti, his model and fellow photographer, and left her to go back to his home in California. The poems are imagined as letters that he writes to her, but never sends. The second section, "my America," is a series of imaginary journal entries covering a trip that the real Edward Weston took, to take pictures for a special edition of Walt Whitman's poetry. The third, shorter section, "To protect them . . .," is made up of fragmented sentences that I imagine he might have cut out of his journals, before letting them all be published.

The article at the start of the dissertation is about the poet Lucie Brock-Broido, who writes poems that draw on a wide range of sources, from other poets to magazine articles. By drawing them together into her poems, she is able to help the reader to connect them better, so that there's less of a sense of separation between works of high art, pop art, and so on.