IN HIS ESSAY ON the uncanny, Freud mentions briefly what he calls a humorous saying: “Love is homesickness” (399). He goes on to connect this to homesickness for the mother’s womb, which manifests itself in the uncanniness of the female genitalia. In this essay I want to look past the depth of Freud’s reading of this expression, and see its obvious meaning—the nostalgia of falling in love. Nostalgia comes from the Greek “nostos” for “return home” and “algia” for pain. The OED defines it as “a form of melancholia caused by prolonged absence from one’s home or country or a severe homesickness.” I see another interpretation of the etymology of this word, however, which implies that the nostalgia or sickness comes from a return home, a return to a home that is changed from the passing of time—that is no longer the ideal home of memory. Love, then, opens the doors of memory, of childhood familiarities and happiness; hence love accesses the desire to go back to a past that, because closed by time, resides in the rosy light of a lost paradise. Love leads to homesickness because its ideal quality illuminates the impossibility of other ideals, those tied to the belongingness of the past—the childhood haunts, the home country.

Yet another way I read this expression turns on understanding the amorous attraction of one who is homeless—falling in love with the pathologically homesick. Love as homesickness describes the erotic quality of the outsider, the attraction of the self-exiled. Taking this expression at “face value” then,
keeping to the surface of its meaning, we step into the realm where love partakes of the outside, where love describes a desire to be with, or to be oneself, an outsider. And the home stands as an important trope for many love narratives, where homesickness becomes both literal and figural with the fugitive, melancholy wayfarer, who is both loved and loves under the sign of his homesickness. The legacy of Byronism in fiction includes linked concepts of existence and love that are based upon an erotics of homesickness. The question presses: Why does the mark of Cain become a mark of the beloved?

The figure of the tortured hero created by Byron stands as an early articulation for theories central to Modernism such as Georges Lukács's theory of the transcendentally homeless—the lack of and need for a home wherein a belief in a true and fixed meaning can be housed, such as God or Nature. Byron's figure of the traveler stands also as a prototype for such influential theories of subjectivity as the world-weary, world-traveled, sophisticated Aesthete of Oscar Wilde and the philosophers of the late Victorian journal The Yellow Book, whose jaded palates seek ever-newer scenes to whet their appetites. Related also to the flâneur in Proust, Baudelaire, and Benjamin, Childe Harold's voyages mark him as a connoisseur of human nature, an idler whose work is to brood. Furthermore, the Byronic hero appears again and again in contemporary fiction and especially in women's mass-market romance as what I have referred to elsewhere as the dangerous lover—a hero who is attractive because of his outsider status, because of his magnetic melancholy, and his way of leading his lover into the dangers of his wasted subjectivity.

In his poetical voyage around the world, Byron's quintessential Byronic hero, Childe Harold, surveys battles, historical sites, the haunts and birthplaces of writers and philosophers. The Byronic figure brings together the tropes of love and homesickness, eroticizing the voyager so important to the imagination of Western culture, linking him to a tradition that stretches back to Odysseus as the lost traveler, looking for his
homeland, and the Flying Dutchman, traveling the seas to find a woman who can redeem him. The mythic liebestod lover, Shakespeare’s Romeo, whose name means “roamer,” or “wanderer,” marks this tie between love and travel. Romeo and Juliet, riddled with metaphors of pilgrimage and sea voyaging, pictures love-sickness leading to a melancholy end. Love’s destiny, fated from the start, encompasses an itinerary that travels the wide ocean. Romeo versifies to Juliet:

I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far,
As that vast shore wash’d with the farthest sea,
I should adventure for such merchandise. (131)

Voyaging is tragic; Romeo must be exiled from his home, his love, and finally his life. The Byronic hero, particularly of the Giaour and Childa Harold, roams disenchanted and exiled; he has no place in the domesticity of society. His dark thoughtfulness keeps him moving, deferring the possibility of settling, and of restfully stopping in a hometown, with intellectual closure, and fully formed ideas.

Childa Harold circles the earth in passionate torment, a ruined vagabond. Doomed to lorn voyaging, he searches, always failing, to be placed, comfortable, situated in a context that fits. Not just aloof, the Byronic Hero often, like the Giaour and the Corsair, is a criminal, an outlaw who is not only self-exiled, but actively, hatefully works against society, as a murderous pirate or a vengeful lover. Outside the law of society, also cast out of a heaven or paradise, he moves with the likes of Lucifer, Cain, the Wandering Jew, and the Flying Dutchman, all popular figures in numerous Gothic novels, as well as other Romantic poetry. The Wandering Jew, Ahasu-erus from medieval legend, was an infidel who cursed Christ at the crucifixion. For this heresy, he was made to wander the earth, until the Second Coming, seeking death and peace. The Byronic figure of Manfred and the Giaour feels he has profoundly sinned, it doesn’t matter how or why, and he is cursed with the pains of remorse, not only for his crime but also for his self-inflicted homelessness. Redemption for these
characters will come with death, unless forgetfulness or madness are possibilities. Childe Harold compares himself to the Wandering Jew: “It is that settled, ceaseless gloom / The fabled Hebrew Wanderer bore; / That will not look beyond the tomb, / But cannot hope for rest before” (47). And Manfred also wants to forget his crime through self-oblivion:

...—I have prayed
For madness as a blessing—’tis denied me.
I have affronted Death—but . . .
... the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless Demon held me back,
Back by a single hair, which would not break.
... I dwell in my despair—
And live—and live for ever. (140)

Manfred is caught in gigantism, his capacity to think and suffer is so immense, it is almost immortal, even super human.

The other possibility of redemption for Byronic dislocation is, of course, finding a home in the beloved. Byron’s unique manifestation of the myth of the wandering and outcast hero brings homelessness into a narrative of love by delineating it as a melancholy chaos that might possibly be ordered or bounded through a second self. Love might give the terrible internalized infinite of his/her desire a home. The Byronic figure’s one beloved, who for the Corsair is Medora, Manfred Astarte, the Giaour Leila, and Childe Harold an unspecified woman, is represented as a container for the purest good and the highest truth, and she could possibly be a realized transcendence or finally a true immanence of meaning obtainable in this world. The Giaour states, “She was my Life’s unerring Light: / That quenched—what beam shall break my night?” (110) Hence homelessness seems possibly surmountable, by discovering the home of the essential in another, in a two-person subjectivity.

Love creates a dwelling place in space and time, filling it up so that it becomes reachable, moveable. One of the most obvious reasons for the appropriation of the Byronic figure by love narratives and romance is the Byronic hero’s sweeping
belief in the possibility of love as the most important force for defining being itself, and for locating the transcendental home.

But heaven itself descends in Love;
A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought;
A ray of Him who formed the whole;
A Glory circling round the soul! (110)

Hence, in some sense, the Byronic philosophy sees love as the ultimate, and only, redemption and home for one in this life. Love is the only force that still holds meaning. Another reason for the Byronic figure’s appropriation in love narratives centers on the impossibility of loving for the tormented misanthropic exile. The very foundations of love for the Byronic hero are based on failure and the forgetting of what is possible. The Byronic hero can, by definition, never be redeemed by becoming a couple, and he is thrown back upon black despair in the wide world through which he must wander without a home. In “The Corsair” Conrad loses Medora because she pines away when she thinks he is dead. In “The Giaour” Leila is murdered by her master because of her love for the Giaour, and the Giaour’s life becomes one of vengeance against her murderer, and then a tortured living in the past of his love. In “Manfred” Astarte has died because of his unspecified sin.

But finally the hero fails because this is the definition of the Byronic Hero. He is the tormented melancholy failure who nears success and then fails and experiences the eternal loss, the repetition, of the possibility of bliss. The Byronic hero would no longer be the Byronic hero without these qualities. He retains his status as the outcast, the dangerous lover whose subjectivity is as large and as impoverished as the world. For Brontë’s Jane Eyre, and innumerable other romantic heroines (and heroes), to become an ideal lover, to turn this impoverished world into a plenitude, is to obtain an impossibility. To make the impossible possible is the erotic excitement of the romance that contains such a hero.
Famous literary figures directly descended from the Byronic hero such as Rochester in *Jane Eyre* and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* exemplify beloved estranged waifs. Rochester explains to Jane that, after his hated wife went mad, and he discovered the lies of his father and brother, how he became a homeless rover.

I transformed myself into a Will-o’-the-wisp. . . . I pursued wanderings as wild as those of the Marsh spirit. I sought the Continent, and went devious through all its lands. . . . Disappointment made me reckless. I tried dissipation . . . in a harsh, bitter frame of mind, the result of a useless, roving, lonely life—corroded with disappointment, sourly disposed against all men. . . . (373-76)

Rochester’s superior, misanthropic pain projects his bitter mind onto the world; he tries to outrun this lack of belief in any possibility of a “home” by wandering. Heathcliff, as a young child, is “dark almost as if it [he] came from the devil” (38). He is a “gypsy brat” who was discovered “starving, houseless, and as good as dumb in the streets of Liverpool” (39). A vagabond, an “out and outer,” he haunts the thresholds of the Earnshaw family, first as a replacement for Mr. Earnshaw’s dead son, then as an abused “servant” by Hindley, after Mr. Earnshaw’s death. He lurks around the margins of society with his rough, brutal, demon-like appearance and actions. Insidious to family unity, to the couple, Catherine describes him, after he returns from his three years of mysterious roaming, “Heathcliff is an unreclaimed creature, without refinement—without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone” (89). His subjectivity, like the desolate moors, desiccates all around him, blighting both interiority and exteriority.

Byron’s identification with Cain is well noted. Cain carries the mark of his sin for killing Abel, and he must be forever an exiled traveler, as expiation for this sin. Besides his poem entitled “Cain,” Childe Harold also sees himself like Cain: “life-abhorring Gloom / Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain’s unresting doom” (46). His gloom will not rest, it stings him into more and more restless roving, ceaseless thinking. He
cannot outrun his remorse as much as he tries. And in “The Giaour” he condemns himself for Leila’s death: “She died—I dare not tell thee how; / But look—’tis written on my brow!” (109) The Byronic figure is marked as a fugitive; his homelessness can be seen on his face. His sin is sometimes so primal, or so profound, it becomes merely a cipher, or even unspeakable. Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner also must wander in expiation for killing the Albatross: “this soul hath been / Alone on a wide wide sea: / So lonely ’twas, that God himself / Scarce seemed there to be” (lines 597-600). His sin and punishment is marked by his eye, which fixes his audience in horror, so that they must listen to his tale. Similarly, the Byronic figure’s lonely soul, while withdrawn from other men, human communities, values, a God, needs to be witnessed; he desires to have someone to hear his story, to see his depths of pain. Byron’s interest in Cain lies in this paradox: his sin and pain is so primal, it is almost unrepresentable, yet it is unmistakably written on his face.

The tormented, mysterious brooder, with outward signs of the darkness that is inside him—his homelessness—has become a ubiquitous trope for the dangerous lover narrative. For instance, in Trollope’s Can You Forgive Her? the villainous rake who is attractive to the heroine and other young women, George Vavasor, receives a knife wound to his face in a violent scuffle as a boy. While outwardly a suave and persuasive gentleman, his scar expresses his inside dark and violent nature, which doesn’t explicitly show itself until the end of the story. “On some occasions, when he was angry or disappointed, it was very hideous; for he would so contort his face that the scar would, as it were, stretch itself out, revealing all its horrors, and his countenance would become all scar” (32). Women, attracted to his dangerousness, want to help and “save” George. Both his lover, Alice, and his sister, despite the good advice of all the men around them, pointing to his rakehell disposition, offer thousands of pounds to get him into Parliament. Alice also proffers herself in marriage; she wants to sacrifice herself to his career. However, unre-
deemably cursed like Cain, he becomes a voyager in the end, sailing for America, to escape punishment for his murderous actions. The “enemy lover” or “demon lover’s” dark frown, his tortured and furrowed brow magnetically draws those around him. Numerous mass-market romance dark lovers carry the mark of Cain. In the first novel in Harlequin’s “[Men Who are] Dangerous to Love” miniseries, Bonnie Gardner’s *Stranger in Her Bed*, the hero, T.J. Swift, has an “angry scar that angled from his right eyebrow and plowed a furrow across his brow and hid in his thick hair” (10). The scar represents his mysterious and guilty past: his deep remorse because of his role in the accidental death of his first wife and his son. Having a past that shows in hard lines of experience, perpetuates the erotic hiddenness of pain while at the same, making this depth naked, exposed. Until saved by the love of the heroine, he is cursed to feel he has no home in the world, that living is his punishment for past errors. Rochester’s scarred face after the fire of Thornfield signifies his lived punishment but also his exiled status; Jane’s love is his only redemption in life.

This secret wound must be read and understood by a lover. Jane describes the desire to plumb Rochester’s abyssal subjectivity, to discern, understand, see, his vast mindscape, which she succeeds in doing. She looks into his face and eyes, and as for the vague something . . . that opened on a careful observer, now and then, in his eye, and closed again before one could fathom the strange depth partially disclosed; that something which used to make me fear and shrink, as if I had been wandering amongst volcanic-looking hills, and had suddenly felt the ground quiver, and seen it gape. . . . Instead of wishing to shun, I longed only to dare—to divine . . . the abyss. (223)

Rochester’s abyss is the sublime impoverishment of his homeless soul, which excites Jane, creates an erotic longing to know, “dare,” and “divine” what is hidden from the observer who is not “careful.” Jane, being the only one who can divine this depth, takes the measure of this subjectivity-world and masters it.
In “Childe Harold,” not only does the hero wander because of his misanthropy, his ideals too pure to be sullied by the common race of men, and his sin, or nameless guilt, but most importantly, he wanders to escape his own consciousness. Hence, his self-exile leads to the question, “What Exile from himself can flee?” (47) He is “the wandering outlaw of his own dark mind” (50). Unlike Cain, the Wandering Jew, and the Ancient Mariner, and this makes him more modern, connecting him forward to Joyce, Stein, Faulkner, Kafka, etc., the Byronic hero is self-exiled. Even though Cain and the Wandering Jew act willfully so that wandering is their punishment, there is no sense that they can choose redemption—to be accepted back into the fold. Yet the Byronic hero might be able to be redeemed, because his exile is situated in his own mind. This links him to Milton’s Satan, who has created his own hell in his mind, his own exile. There are echoes of Satan in Childe Harold and when the spirits speak to Manfred: “By thy delight in others’ pain, / And by the brotherhood of Cain, / I call upon thee! And compel / Thyself to be thy proper Hell!” (131). Milton’s Satan in Paradise Lost cries, “Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell” (4.75). But even with Satan, there are exterior forces at work (God) that deny him access back to heaven. But the Byronic hero acts, at each moment, on his own free will. This existential abyss of free will is why Nietzsche preferred Byron’s Faustian Manfred to Goethe’s Faust. Unlike Faust, Manfred stands alone, he does not even give the Devil his due. His subjectivity becomes entirely his own.

The Byronic self complicates the interior and exterior of subjectivity. Related to the Romantic sublime, his subjectivity lacks liminals; it is boundless. One reason why the Byronic hero exiles himself from society is that his consciousness creates the world as a mirror of his own hellish mind; the world is an interior space where all is decimated of meaning. He restlessly circles this world of his own making, this infinite mindscape. The world can provide no relief or change because of the immutable script in his mind.
And stung my every thought to strife.
Alike all time, abhorred all place,
Shuddering I shrank from Nature's face,
Where every hue the charmed before
The blackness of my bosom wore. (112)

His thoughts taint "all time," "all place," and make all of Nature black like his own heart.

The Byronic figure's hell is situated in memory. It is because he cannot forget the past that he is imprisoned in a soul tormented by remorse. In some sense, he has lost the possibility of the present, as an ever-changing, moving scene, containing the possibility of change, because of his moral fixity on a point in the past that will not pass. Manfred states, "and for the future, / till the past be gulfed in darkness, / It is not of my search" (132). The past negates temporality; the only way he can fall back into time, is if the past is obliterated, "gulfed in darkness." He is lost in a self-perpetuating agony that comes from an idealization of a "before" past—"before" his fall from grace, "before" his realization of the vanity and valuelessness of human society. The Byronic hero feels he once had a home in this world, before he realized his desires were so profound they could never be fulfilled in this life. He imagines that, in the past, he lived in a world full of immanent meaning, where his desires for ideals such as Truth, Beauty, and Purity were still in play, still open as possibilities. Yet from the beginning of "Childe Harold," "The Giaour," and "Manfred," the Byronic hero is always already unredeemable. The past can never be passed. His homesick wandering is interminable because he cannot absent himself from time, from those aspects of life which make people mortal, earth-bound, yet he also feels himself cast out of a present and future temporality, an interest and place in a country, a people, a community.

As a wanderer whose subjectivity includes the whole world—eternal space—the Byronic hero also occludes time, in his ownership of infinity. He has lived ages, an eternity, even though he is still young. He has experienced more in
his short life than most will in a whole long life. A moment of the Ciaour’s life is described:

But in that instant o’er his soul
Winters of Memory seem to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime...

Though in Time’s record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that Conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end. (91)

Byronic mind time is a momentary intensification where an eternity is lived, or an infinity of space is realized.

Temporality and spatiality also lead to homelessness; the eternal or infinite are not dwelling places where familiarity is encountered, where final beliefs are housed, where fixed truths are discoverable. The Byronic subjectivity is unbounded; he contains everything, and he decimates all of it, hence containing nothingness in all its vastness. The Byronic impairment of the fabric of time takes his story into the mythic realm, a transcendental outside which desired, exhaustedly and from the start, the cessation of time, of its self.

The Byronic mind is imprisoned in his thoughts; and these thoughts alienate the man, the subject, from the world, from moving time, from presence. This figure, attempting to reconcile the relationship of his mind and the world, becomes the intellectual of Novalis’s expression: “Philosophy is actually homesickness—the urge to be everywhere at home” (135). The Byronic brooder has this urge, which explains his ceaseless roving, his desire for the highest ideals, the purest truths.

The German Romantics wrote on the possibility of the “modern” self being unified and of this self having and living a meaningful connectedness with the “external” world. Heathcliff explains, “My mind is so eternally secluded in itself” (320). Abrams, in his Natural Supernaturalism, explores the use of the trope of the journey and a sickness for home
in the German Romantics’ ideas on consciousness. Focusing on Schiller, Abrams traces the theory of the journey of the individual from an original self-unity, a home, through a complex self-consciousness that involves seeing the self as an object, and then a reaching for a higher unity, which is, however, never quite attainable. This is precisely what Hegel later calls his dialectic, which is the movement of consciousness from an initial alienation, to a transcending of this objectification of the self, which leads, finally, to a synthesis wherein the self finds a home in his/her otherness. I see Byron’s philosophy as more radical, skeptical, and hence more modern; it breaks the Hegelian dialectical circle. In Byron, the spirit does not become alienated so that it can find itself again as an absolute goal, but it becomes alienated and its meaning comes from this alienation and the always failed attempt to return to this lost home of unity. Byron’s ideas are more closely related to the Kantian crisis or what Kant himself called his “Copernican Revolution” or “transcendental idealism,” an important point in philosophy with which all the German Romantics wrestled. Kant was the first to see space and time grounded in the experiencing subject. The “thing in itself” became totally unknowable to the subject because the thing must always be filtered through our sense of time and space; they are forms of our sensibility with which we perceive the world. Thus the Kantian crisis constructs the subject as one whose experience must always be mediated. Friedrich Hölderlin saw this loss of immediacy as the definition of tragedy—the tragedy of the speculative. Hölderlin feels that the essence of tragedy is that we can never have immediate experience and that as soon as we think, then we have always already lost immediacy. Therefore, the subject thinks to bring the object of thought closer, through knowledge, but this attempt to bring closer always causes the “thing” to withdraw. Hölderlin was continually working, primarily through his poetry, to close up the Kantian “wound,” although he was tortured by the final impossibility of this task. The Byronic figure’s tragedy, similarly, is that consciousness itself, always brings soli-
tary wandering, loss of immediacy, loss of presence—of the present. Byron’s philosophy, to return to Novalis’s phrase, is homesickness; it’s an attempt to find subjectivity “at home” in the world; he has the “urge to be everywhere at home.” He wants the world to contain his ideals, to fulfill his desires, and he brings the whole world into play, and sets it in relation to his thoughts, his consciousness. But because he fails, the relationship between the traveled world and the mind does not bring a sense of the “whole,” but rather of the irrevocably lost. The lostness does not belittle the world, however, but makes it eternal and infinite, hence its ravaged emptiness creates infinite longing rather than indifference.

Breaking out of the economics of the Hegelian dialectical circle can be seen as a kind of escape. Many theorists, particularly Derrida, Deleuze, Ronell, and Blanchot see the radical outside of the dialectic as a new-found freedom, albeit on the edge of possibility. Living in every way just on the edge, of oblivion, of insanity, of death, the Byronic figure’s lostness creates a realm of escape, an outside where the pains of living become so mythical and immense, subjectivity may dissolve at any moment. Everyday difficulties are no worry to such a sublimely tormented well of selfhood, the existential edge lies so close, failure is on such a large scale, it hardly matters anymore. In the freedom to be passionately tormented lies the attraction of a Rochester or Heathcliff.

One of the measures of homelessness is being somehow, perhaps impossibly, outside the pale of the family. Manfred’s escape from the father is to be hardly mortal, therefore not subject to the laws of the father, yet not himself a god, or father. “But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we, / Half dust, half deity, alike unfit / To sink or soar” (132). Manfred’s in-betweenness, his unfitness creates “a line of escape,” as Deleuze would call it; homelessness traces a way out. Deleuze and Guattari explore escaping as not so much a movement in any particular direction, but rather a “flight of intensity,” the ability to go “head over heels and away” (6). This intense flight signifies, represents, as little as possible, it
“breaks the symbolic structure” (7). Possible flight lines in Byronic love narratives lie in intense study, insomnia, and anorexia.

The pallid thinker, the intellectual, and the student: Manfred studies his books on occult knowledge, reading all through the night, greeting the dawn with bleary eyes. The Byronic figure, often a chronic insomniac, desires not only forgetfulness and oblivion but also the rest of sleep, the mind’s calming from the cycle of tormenting remorse. The beginning of Manfred shows the pain of impossible sleep.

The lamp must be replenished, but even then
It will not bum so long as I must watch:
My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not. . . . (125)

Manfred’s needed sleep and highly-strung wakefulness associate him with night journeys, done in lunar light. The stable temporality that runs with the daylight work day and nighttime sleep is disrupted into a non-working wakefulness. Interrupting the duty of hours, he is outside the work-a-day world, connected to the evil deeds that happen at night, the guilty pillow, the vampire, and the night-ghoul. Blanchot writes of night as figural for an “outside”—outside the neat circle of the Hegelian dialectic. The circular return of Hegel’s thesis/antithesis/synthesis, broken by the secret night of no return dissolves in a radical outside of no return, of the journeyer who does not come home.

Heathcliff’s chronic wakefulness after Catherine’s death keeps his nerves highly strung, raking his body such that his nightwalking becomes his only work. Trying to sleep, Heathcliff describes his insomnia, which is caused by Catherine’s wandering ghost: “I closed my eyes, she was either outside the window, or sliding back the panels, or entering the room, or even resting her darling head on the same pillow as she did when a child. And I must open my lids to see. And so I opened them a hundred times a-night” (230). Nelly describes him as a person “going blind with loss of sleep” (262). While
the tortured quality of this starved state is clear, escape also
opens as a possibility, pointing to an explanation as to why
the outlawry of the Byronic figure is attractive to love nar-
ratives. Being either so large that he might trace a line of
escape out of the dreary world of commonplace concerns, or
so slender he might slip out under cover of the secret night,
the Byronic figure traces a path of freedom with his home-
lessness. Literally starving oneself, going on a hunger strike,
as Catherine does, might be the only way out of an intolerable
existence. Jane Eyre attempts flight in this manner: “Resolve,
equally wrought up, instigated some strange expedient to
achieve escape from the insupportable oppression—as run-
ning away, or, if that could not be affected, never eating or
drinking more, and letting myself die” (11). Byron himself
dieteted off and on throughout his life, desiring to represent
with his body the romantic figure, “pale and slender,” as Eis-
ler writes in her popular biography, “haunted by secret sor-
row and wasting loss” (120). Being consumed from within,
the pallid wraith might become so small, miniature such that
he could almost disappear. The escape would free him from
a dreary life into a fantasy of pure ideals, passion fulfilled.

To conclude then, the erotics of homesickness as articu-
lated by the Byronic hero shape a concept of subjectivity
based on failure—the failure of love, of finding a home, of
finding meaning. The homesick subject, always longing,
points to an ideal it can never have. But at the heart of this
failure lies an ontology of escape, of this very lostness com-
pleting being. And if this completion occurs, through some
impossible movement, then it happens through the incomm-
ensurable flash of love.

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