

## APPENDIX 2: Warne's Assignment and Sample Assignment English 2980: Poetry of Mourning, U of Manitoba, Winter 2021

### Assignment Sheet: Meaning From Scraps

With this engagement activity, worth 10% of your final grade, we continue our exploration of cultural responses to grief by focusing on the public grieving of famous individuals. This work builds on our viewing of Queen Victoria's *Album Consolativum* and prepares us for our study of Anne Carson's *Nox*, a memorial poem indebted to scrapbooking methods.

Through this engagement activity, we will learn about newspaper and magazine coverage of the death of famous individuals (coverage that included the publication of memorial poetry) AND we will learn about nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scrapbooking culture. We will explore connections between making and grieving AND we will reflect on how individuals responded creatively to the deaths of celebrities.



Collage and Collage Poem by Daniel Fountain

### Making Task (one to three scrapbook pages)

- Begin your work for this assignment by exploring "Yes, this is my album": *Victorian Collections of Scraps, Signatures and Seaweed*, curated by Elizabeth Bassett. I recommend spending an hour to two hours exploring [this resource](#) and learning about the history of scrapbooking.
- Your next step is to watch my short context video on a scrapbook dedicated to the life and death of Robert Falcon Scott in which I share the insights of Dr. Cath Feely (University of Derby). You will find Dr. Feely's podcast, [Scraps of Scott](#), short, immersive, and very informative.
- Now, watch the video tutorial on collage prepared for us by artist Daniel Fountain.
- Your next task is to check out the Sample Assignment created to give you a clear sense of expectations and the kinds of making and writing you might do.

With this material supporting you, explore the files of digitized periodical press coverage on the deaths of Queen Victoria and Sir John Franklin. Choose ONE of these celebrities and choose the materials you wish to incorporate in your page(s). You are free to make pages that contain only visual elements, that use only text (perhaps a collage poem?), or that combine image and text.

Create between one and three pages, which you will share with the class in an upcoming Virtual Exhibit. Keep in mind as you make your plans that you will be discussing your choices and reflecting both on what you noticed in the periodical press file AND on what you've made. Print the periodical press materials you wish to use and begin making. If your circumstances make printing difficult and you want to use digital tools and methods (instead of scissors and glue), I'm open to that.

### Reflection and Writing Task (300-500 words total, divided roughly between two tasks)

In a well-developed paragraph, share a reflection on the periodical press materials. You may want to share your thoughts on the ways the press reports express grief or try to shape experiences of grief. You may want to analyze a memorial poem from the periodical press; perhaps there is a rhetorical strategy in play in an article that interests you. Perhaps you would like to reflect on the idea of collective or societal grief—of publicly expressed and widely felt grief for a well-known person; perhaps you are interested in how images, prose and poetry differ from one another or complement one another. Whatever you explore, offer a detailed and clearly written paragraph on a facet of press coverage of interest to you.

In a second well-developed paragraph, please share a maker's statement in which you reflect on one or more of the following: the creative choices you made, your selection of materials, the process of making, and/or features of your scrapbook page you wish to highlight.

Please embed photographs of your collages in your document; make a pdf; and upload that pdf to the Scrapbook Assignment folder. Your assignment is due FRIDAY APRIL 9. Enjoy!



Page from Cecelia Davies Sylvester's Scrapbook ("Traditional Scrapbooks: From the Archives" / UVic Libraries; "Yes, this is my album": Victorian Collections of Scraps, Signatures and Seaweed)

Name  
Student #  
Date

[SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT]

### Science, Poetry and Widowhood: On Press Coverage of the Death of Robert Falcon Scott



**Primary Materials Reflection:** Reviewing the periodical press' coverage of the tragic conclusion of Robert Falcon Scott's second Antarctic Voyage (1910-1912), I was struck by the depiction of Scott as both a scientist and a military hero. Reports that the Antarctic fossils Scott discovered (the first ever located) were found beside his frozen body exemplify the depiction of scientific research as a form of heroic sacrifice. While reflections on a nation's scientific achievements dominate accounts of Scott's death, I was interested to learn that a wooden

cross made and erected in Antarctica by surviving crew members featured words from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "Ulysses," specifically the line: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." The use of a British poet's words to memorialize deaths at such a great distance from England signals the extent to which the exploration of Antarctica by British men had cultural as well as scientific significance. I noted that very little was said by the press about the grief of Scott's family, his wife and their son, and I have consequently prioritized domestic life and private grief in my collage.

**Maker's Statement:** My collage, titled "Chimney Swift Widow," features: images of chimney swifts in flight, photographs of Scott and his widow that circulated in newspapers, and images related to handicrafts traditionally associated with women. I chose the birds, sourced from my local newspaper, because swifts, who cannot perch like other birds, spend their waking hours in flight. When they rest, they often choose the interior surfaces of chimneys, which are architectural emblems of domesticity and obviously associated with warmth. These birds, linked with restless movement and the shelter of human homes, are arranged in a way that gestures to an emotional connection between a wife and husband who have been separated, initially by geographical distance and then by death. I selected the photographs because of Scott's depiction in military uniform, his hat identifying him as outdoors, this in contrast to his wife's depiction in dress clothes that would be worn in an interior space and that are indicative of her upper-class status and leisured life. I explore ideas of inside and outside, home and away, and women's lives and men's with the handicraft materials. The knitting needles, a familiar and homey tool, are made ominous through their scale and positioning. The portion of a quilt and the balls of yarn evoke warmth and domestic comfort. The roundness of the balls of yarn are echoed by the chronometer and the map of the South Pole—reminders of the distance that Scott navigated and the cold climate in which he died. I hope this piece communicates my interest in the life of a woman who waited at home for a man who did not return.