AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER
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PRESENTS

WORDS on PLAYS

INSIGHT INTO THE PLAY, THE PLAYWRIGHT, AND THE PRODUCTION

A Moon for the Misbegotten

BY EUGENE O’NEILL
DIRECTED BY LAIRD WILLIAMSON
GEARY THEATER
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CHARACTERS, CAST, AND SYNOPSIS OF  
A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN

A Moon for the Misbegotten was first performed in a Theatre Guild production at the Hartman Theatre in Columbus, Ohio, in 1947. The first New York production of A Moon for the Misbegotten opened at the Bijou Theatre in 1957.

CHARACTERS AND CAST
(The following character descriptions, listed in order of appearance, are excerpted from Eugene O’Neill’s stage directions for A Moon for the Misbegotten: A Play in Four Acts, published in 1952).

JOSIE HOGAN  
Robin Weigert
Josie is 28. Her sloping shoulders are broad, her chest deep with large, firm breasts, her waist wide but slender by contrast with her hips and thighs. She has long smooth arms, immensely strong, although no muscles show. The same is true of her legs.

She is more powerful than any but an exceptionally strong man, able to do the manual labor of two ordinary men. But there is no mannish quality about her. She is all woman.

The map of Ireland is stamped on her face, with its long upper lip and small nose, thick black eyebrows, black hair as coarse as a horse’s mane, freckled, sunburned fair skin, high cheekbones, and heavy jaw. It is not a pretty face, but her large dark-blue eyes give it a note of beauty, and her smile, revealing even, white teeth, gives it charm.

[As the play opens,] she wears a cheap, sleeveless, blue cotton dress. Her feet are bare, the soles earth-stained and tough as leather.

MIKE HOGAN, JOSIE’S BROTHER  
Andy Butterfield
Mike Hogan is 20. He is sturdily built, but seems almost puny compared to her. He has a common Irish face, its expression sullen, or slyly cunning, or primly self-righteous. He never forgets that he is a good Catholic, faithful to all the observances, and so is one of the elite of Almighty God in a world of damned sinners composed of Protestants and bad Catholics. In brief, Mike is a New England Irish Catholic Puritan, Grade B, and an extremely irritating youth to have around.

PHIL HOGAN, THEIR FATHER  
Raye Birk
Hogan is 55. He has a thick neck, lumpy, sloping shoulders, a barrel-like trunk, stumpy legs, and big feet. His arms are short and muscular, with large hairy hands. His head is
round with thinning sandy hair. His face is fat with a snub nose, long upper lip, big mouth, and little blue eyes with bleached lashes and eyebrows that remind one of a white pig’s. [As the play opens,] he wears heavy brogans, filthy overalls, and a dirty short-sleeved undershirt. Arms and face are sunburned and freckled. On his head is an old wide-brimmed hat of coarse straw that would look more becoming on a horse. His voice is high-pitched with a pronounced brogue.

He is one of those people who can drink an enormous amount and be absolutely plastered when they want to be for their own pleasure, but at the same time are able to pull themselves together when they wish and be cunningly clear-headed.

JAMES TYRONE, JR. MARCO BARRICELLI

Tyrone is in his early 40s, broad-shouldered and deep-chested. His naturally fine physique has become soft and soggy from dissipation, but his face is still good-looking despite its unhealthy puffiness and the bags under the eyes. His eyes are brown, the whites congested and yellowish. His nose, big and aquiline, gives his face a certain Mephistophelian quality which is accentuated by his habitually cynical expression. But when he smiles without sneering, he still has the ghost of a former youthful, irresponsible Irish charm—that of the beguiling ne’er-do-well, sentimental and romantic. It is his humor and charm which have kept him attractive to women, and popular with men as a drinking companion. [As the play opens,] he is dressed in an expensive dark-brown suit, tight-fitting and drawn in at the waist, dark-brown made-to-order shoes and silk socks, a white silk shirt, silk handkerchief in breast pocket, a dark tie. This get-up suggests that he follows a style set by well-groomed Broadway gamblers who would like to be mistaken for Wall Street brokers.

T. STEDMAN HARDER DAVID ARROW

Harder is in his late 30s but looks younger because his face is unmarked by worry, ambition, or any of the common hazards of life. No matter how long he lives, his four undergraduate years will always be for him the most significant in his life, and the moment of his highest achievement the time he was tapped for an exclusive Senior Society at the Ivy university to which his father had given millions. Since that day he has felt no need for further aspiring, no urge to do anything except settle down on his estate and live the life of a country gentleman, mildly interested in saddle horses and sport models of foreign automobiles. He is not the blatanly silly, playboy heir to millions whose antics make newspaper headlines. He doesn’t drink much except when he attends his class reunion every spring—the most exciting episode of each year for him. He doesn’t give wild parties, doesn’t chase after musical-comedy cuties, is a mildly contented husband and father of three
children. A not unpleasant man, affable, good-looking in an ordinary way, sunburnt and healthy, beginning to take on fat, he is simply immature, naturally lethargic, a bit stupid. Coddled from birth, everything arranged and made easy for him, deferred to because of his wealth, he usually has the self-confident attitude of acknowledged superiority, but assumes a supercilious insecure air when dealing with people beyond his ken. He is dressed in a beautifully tailored English tweed coat and whipcord riding breeches, and immaculately polished English riding boots with spurs, and carries a riding crop in his hand.

It would be hard to find anyone more ill-equipped for combat with the Hogans. He has never come in contact with anyone like them. To make matters easier for them he is deliberate in his speech, slow on the uptake, and has no sense of humor. The experienced strategy of the Hogans in verbal battle is to take the offensive at once and never let an opponent get set to hit back. Also, they use a beautifully coordinated, bewildering change of pace, switching suddenly from jarring shouts to low, confidential vituperation. And they exaggerate their Irish brogues to confuse an enemy still further.

SCENE OF THE PLAY
The play takes place in Connecticut at the home of tenant farmer Phil Hogan between the hours of noon on a day in early September, 1923, and sunrise of the following day. The house is not, to speak mildly, a fine example of New England architecture, placed so
perfectly in its setting that it appears a harmonious part of the landscape, rooted in the earth. It has been moved to its present site, and looks it. An old boxlike, clapboarded affair, with a shingled roof and brick chimney, it is propped up about two feet above ground by layers of timber blocks. There are two windows on the lower floor of this side of the house which faces front, and one window on the floor above. These windows have no shutters, curtains, or shades. Each has at least one pane missing, a square of cardboard taking its place. The house had once been painted a repulsive yellow with brown trim, but the walls now are a blackened and weathered gray, flaked with streaks and splotches of dim lemon. Just around the left corner of the house, a flight of steps leads to the front door. To make matters worse, a one-story, one-room addition has been tacked on at right. About twelve feet long by six high, this room, which is Josie Hogan's bedroom, is evidently homemade. Its walls and sloping roof are covered with tar paper, faded to dark gray. Close to where it joins the house, there is a door with a flight of three unpainted steps leading to the ground. At right of door is a small window.

From these steps there is a footpath going around an old pear tree, at right-rear, through a field of hay stubble to a patch of woods. The same path also extends left to join a dirt road which leads up from the county highway (about a hundred yards off left) to the front door of the house, and thence back through a scraggly orchard of apple trees to the barn. Close to the house, under the window next to Josie's bedroom, there is a big boulder with a flat top.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. The farmhouse. Around noon. Early September, 1923. The day is clear and hot. Josie Hogan is helping her younger brother, Mike, run away from the farm where they live and work for their father, Phil Hogan. Their two older brothers have already been driven away by their father's bullying, slave-driving ways, and Mike is likely to seek refuge with one of them—either Thomas, a cop, or John, a bartender. As Mike slinks away, Josie spies Hogan, who has noticed his son's absence from the field, running toward the house. Josie, the only one of the children strong enough to stand up to their father, takes a sawed-off broom handle and steadies herself for his arrival.

Hogan arrives in a flurry of insults, demanding to know where the lazy bastard has gone. Josie tells him that Mike, like his brothers, has run off to make his way in the world, and Hogan should just come to terms with it. Hogan's temper subsides as father and daughter, who actually have a loving, albeit contentious relationship, settle into a discussion of family history, their favorite scams, and Josie's reputation for having her wanton way with men. Josie has feelings for Jim Tyrone, the soon-to-be-rich heir of the Tyrone
estate (which includes the farm worked by the Hogans), a drunken philanderer, and an out-of-work actor. Tyrone has promised to sell Hogan the rights to the farm at a reasonable price, once the rest of his inheritance comes through. But Hogan tells Josie that he is worried that Tyrone, during a bout of drunkenness, will renege on his promise and sell out to their rich, hostile neighbor, the pompous T. Stedman Harder. Hogan tries to sell Josie on the idea of entrapping Tyrone into marriage, ostensibly as a way of getting their hands on the Tyrone family money and ensuring that Tyrone will never sell their farm out from under them. They joke about Josie getting Tyrone drunk and into bed, and then Hogan showing up with witnesses to catch them “in the act.”

Tyrone arrives, and he and Hogan commence their usual teasing banter of intimidating landlord and long-suffering tenant farmer, while Tyrone and Josie flirt. Tyrone explains that Harder plans to stop by the farm to complain about the Hogans’ pigs wallowing in Harder’s ice pond. The three look forward to crossing wits with their arrogant neighbor.

Harder arrives on horseback and, as expected, is no match for the Hogans’ verbal attacks. They put Harder firmly in his place, and he leaves infuriated. Tyrone and Josie arrange a “moonlight date” for 9 o’clock that evening.

Act II. A clear, warm moonlit night, around 11 o’clock. Josie is now dressed in her Sunday best, sitting alone awaiting Tyrone’s arrival. But it is Hogan, not Tyrone, who arrives, apparently completely intoxicated and fit to be tied. He tells Josie that Tyrone got so drunk at the inn that he agreed to sell the Hogans’ farm to Harder for $10,000 in cash. Josie is extremely upset and swears vengeance. When the two see Tyrone swaggering toward the house, Josie goes inside to get ready to meet him.

Act III. The same. No time elapses between Acts II and III. Josie comes out of the house, ready for her midnight date. She banishes Hogan to his room and prepares to take her revenge.

Costume sketch for Josie Hogan and Jim Tyrone by Sandra Woodall
Tyrone arrives, apologizing for being so late, and Josie forgives him, in spite of herself. Tyrone tells Josie that he “has begun to love her a lot,” and she draws him into her arms. They try to find a way to be comfortable together: Tyrone consumed by guilty secrets of his past, Josie confused by her conflicting desire for revenge against and love for Tyrone. Tyrone asks her to suspend her usual self-mocking, bawdy banter, to just be herself with him for once. As they settle in for the evening together, Josie fetches a bottle of her father’s best whiskey.

During a long night of whiskey, moonlight, and confession, Josie and Tyrone share their darkest secrets and discover the depth of their love for each other. Tyrone tells Josie about his feelings of guilt for womanizing with prostitutes and drinking in New York, while Josie admits that she is still a virgin and not the whore everyone assumes she is and she pretends to be. Tyrone tells Josie how he fooled her father into thinking he was going to sell the farm to Harder and goes on to confess how much he loves Hogan and his daughter. Josie realizes he never had any intention of selling the farm, and that her sense of hurt and revenge is ill-placed. Tyrone goes on to confess his shameful, drunken carrying on with a prostitute after his mother died. Believing no one could love him, he wishes for one night of solace and rest in Josie’s arms. He tells her that she is beautiful and that he loves her, but that he can never be worthy of her love and knows that his own self-loathing over his past indiscretions will eventually drive him away. Josie offers him forgiveness, absolution, and comfort, and he falls asleep on her breast. Watching him sleep, she realizes that Tyrone is in fact already dead.

Act IV. The same—dawn of the following morning. Josie’s father returns, without witnesses, to find Tyrone asleep on Josie, who has held him in her arms all night. She realizes that she is the one who has been duped by her father. Hogan’s desire was for Josie to find her own joy, and the “scheme” to entrap Tyrone was the only way he could figure out to bring her and Tyrone together. When Tyrone eventually wakes up, he is at first oblivious of the dark secrets he has shared with Josie under the influence of alcohol and a “lover’s moon.” As he does slowly remember, he is appalled. But he also feels strangely refreshed and renewed. Although he declares his love for Josie, both of them know that he will leave and not return. The play closes with Josie and her father left alone to tend the farm and their lives together. As the curtain falls, Josie wishes Tyrone an early death and eternal rest “in forgiveness and peace.”
A SECOND LOOK, AND A SECOND CHANCE TO FORGIVE

BY BARBARA GELB

Struggling to complete *A Moon for the Misbegotten* before illness permanently silenced his writing in 1943, Eugene O’Neill fancifully described the character based on his older brother, James O’Neill, Jr., as an “alien.”

When Jim was born, wrote O’Neill in an early attempt to bring the character into focus, the first thing he did was “look around at the round earth and realize” he had been “sent to the wrong planet.”

“God had double-crossed him,” O’Neill elaborated in his scenario for the play, “and so he began to curse . . . and he reached for a bottle of whiskey and said to himself, By God, I’ll show you! Try and catch me now. And so he lived on cursing & drinking, being slapped on the back and no one ever caught him.”

The idea for the play struck O’Neill almost immediately after he completed *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, his autobiographical masterpiece, which takes place in New London,
Connecticut, in 1912. On October 29, 1941, he noted in his work diary, “This can be strange combination comic-tragic—am enthused about it.”

The play afforded O'Neill a second look at his brother, depicted in *Long Day’s Journey* as a 33-year-old, cynical, second-rate actor, alcoholic but still functional. Set 11 years later, *A Moon for the Misbegotten* portrays the brother (called James Tyrone, Jr., in both plays) as a considerably more depressed, guilt-ridden, and alcohol-sodden failure. He is now in his early 40s and on the brink of death.

Rather than inhabiting the realistic setting of *Long Day’s Journey*, which closely mirrors the life of O’Neill’s brother, the Jim Tyrone of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* materializes amid a twisted fable that is part tragedy, part raucous comedy, and part miracle play. At the time and place we meet this older Jim—“early September, 1923,” on a farm in Connecticut—the real Jim was in a New Jersey sanitarium, nearly blind and in the terminal stage of alcoholism.

*A Moon for the Misbegotten* was, it seems, a wish fulfillment on O’Neill’s part. He had been unable to forgive his brother’s outrageous behavior during the months before his death, and would not visit him at the sanitarium. The play in one sense was a belated offering, two decades later, of redemption for his brother and expiation for O’Neill’s own guilty lack of compassion at the time. The *Moon* O’Neill conjured was, in effect, a Mass for the long-dead brother he had once dearly loved but had come to resent.

The true story that drives *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is that of the final illness, in 1922, of Jim’s (and Eugene’s) mother, Ella. After their father’s death in 1920, Jim had at last given up drinking for his mother’s sake. Sober for a year and a half, he accompanied her to
California to look into one of his father’s real estate investments, and there she fell ill with an incurable brain tumor. Awaiting her death in terror, Jim began drinking again as she lay in a coma. He became convinced that she awakened long enough to be aware of his condition and to die in despair.

Even worse, on the train bearing his mother’s coffin home he picked up a prostitute and locked himself with her into his compartment, arriving in New York too drunk and debauched to attend to the disposition of his mother’s body. All this soon became known to his appalled brother.

That much of the story is accurately told in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, in the searing Act III monologue delivered by Jim. The play’s physical setting is also drawn from life—a ramshackle property near New London that had been owned by O’Neill’s father and leased to a disreputable pig farmer, John (Dirty) Dolan, his name in the play changed to Phil Hogan.

What O’Neill wove out of whole cloth was a device to give his brother the forgiveness denied him in real life. He invented Josie Hogan, the pig farmer’s daughter, a bigger-than-life Mother Earth who, beneath a mock-bawdy exterior, possesses a saintly gentleness and compassion.

O’Neill knew, of course, that casting an actress of those dimensions would be virtually impossible, but he wanted whoever played the role to convey a quality of supernatural power. He wished Josie to be seen as Jim’s savior, the one person to whom he could confess his betrayal of his mother and be given absolution in his mother’s name. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is, essentially, a religious play, deeply rooted in the Roman Catholic heritage that O’Neill could never entirely leave behind.

From the play, we learn little about Jim except for this sorry episode, and it is helpful to recall that he is the same Jim who, in *Long Day’s Journey*, was provided by O’Neill (albeit somewhat sketchily) with a background of childhood tragedy. And while *A Moon for the Misbegotten* surely stands on its own as a play of profound insight and humanity, its link to *Long Day’s Journey* enriches it and helps explain Jim’s ultimate disintegration. (a.c.t. Associate Artist Marco Barricelli also portrayed Jim in the a.c.t. 1999 production of *Long Day’s Journey*, also directed by Laird Williamson.)

The true story began in the winter of 1885, when Jim, known in the family bosom as Jamie, was seven. His mother left him and his brother, Edmund, not quite two, in their grandmother’s care in New York while she went off to join her husband, the matinee idol James O’Neill, on his Western theatrical tour.

Jamie had traveled from infancy with his parents, living in the closest intimacy with them in hotel rooms across the country. Deprived of companions his own age, he was
preternaturally attached to and dependent on his mother and was acutely jealous and resentful of his baby brother’s intrusion into their lives.

During his mother’s absence, Jamie contracted measles and, despite warnings to stay away, went into Edmund’s room and infected him. Before his mother could return, Edmund died. This became the defining event of the O’Neill family tragedy, brooded upon and ever present to all the O’Neills, even to Eugene, who was not born until three years later. The circumstance of the baby’s death was of particularly excruciating pain to Jamie because his beloved mother, in her grief and shock, accused him of having deliberately transmitted his illness to the baby.

In notes to himself years later, Eugene O'Neill attempted to understand the frenzied aftershock of Edmund’s death. He wondered if Jamie had indeed “unconsciously” killed Edmund. Later, in a preliminary draft of *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, he wrote a speech for Jamie who, under the influence of alcohol, makes the shocking confession that he “hated” the baby and purposely went into his room, hoping to give him measles.

“I was glad when he died,” Jamie Tyrone blurts out. Whether or not Jamie O’Neill really did utter these words, O’Neill deleted them from the play’s final version, evidently believing they placed his brother in too villainous a light. In any case, the real Jamie, though he apparently repressed his misery for a time, was ultimately destroyed by the guilty conviction that the mother he worshiped believed he had killed his baby brother and could not forgive him.

Jamie’s misery was compounded when, shortly after his brother’s death, he was banished to a Roman Catholic boarding school in Indiana, where he was to spend the next nine years. Doubtless trying to redeem himself, Jamie at first strove to be an exemplary student, earning high grades and winning one award after another in such subjects as rhetoric, elocution, oratory, and Christian doctrine.

At ten, he appeared to accept with good grace the arrival of another brother, Eugene. In this instance it was a little easier to suppress his jealousy, for he now had a life and friends apart from his parents and no longer felt compelled to vie for his mother’s daily attention, although he did yearn for her visits at school.

If O’Neill’s early scenario for *A Moon for the Misbegotten* may be taken literally, Jamie drew profound solace from the religious belief in which he had been brought up. “There was once a boy who loved . . . purity and God with a great quiet passion inside him,” reads a line in the scenario describing Jim Tyrone; indeed, wrote O’Neill, Jim had actually contemplated giving up “self & the world to worship of God.”

Popular with his fellow students, as well as something of a teacher’s pet, Jamie appeared in dramatic productions and played shortstop on the baseball team. No one who knew this
bright, ingratiating, high-achieving boy would have predicted anything but the rosiest of futures for him.

His behavior turned erratic in his early teens when, during a school vacation, he stumbled on his mother giving herself a morphine injection. “Christ, I'd never dreamed before that any women but whores took dope!” Jim tells his younger brother in *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Beginning with his return to school in 1892, he began his spiral downward. Although still capable of bursts of exemplary scholarship and literary achievement, he appears from that point on to have lost heart. He began to blame his father for his mother’s condition and, for the first time, displayed an open disrespect that was to ripen into ever-increasing nastiness.

James O’Neill voiced his concern in a letter to the president of his son’s school, saying he had sternly lectured his son. “If he can be kept well in hand for the next two years I am sure he will make a good man,” wrote James, presciently adding: “On the other hand there is a possible chance of his going to the dogs. During my conversation with him in Chicago I found I was no longer talking to a child. He has some very old ideas of Life and not the best by any means. ... I shall watch his progress anxiously. During the next few years I shall write him often, doing all I can to keep him at his work and in the right path.”

James’s fatherly concern proved futile. Jamie left his boarding school shortly before his 16th birthday and, in quick succession, attended two other schools, performing with sporadic brilliance but often misbehaving.

Less than two months into his senior year at St. John’s College (on the Bronx site that later became Fordham University), Jamie was already in the decline from which he never sprang back. On a bet, six months before graduation, Jamie brought a prostitute to the campus and tried to pass her off to the Jesuit faculty as his sister. He was promptly expelled.

He halfheartedly tried various occupations and at last, grudgingly, allowed his father to start him on an acting career. And since he was good-looking, with his father’s voice and his Irish wit and charm, the stage did, at first, seem to suit him.

But Jamie made little effort to grow as an actor. He was often drunk onstage, justifying his behavior by insisting his father had “forced” him into the theater.

On tour, Jamie would invite the town prostitutes to sit in the boxes and cheer him on. Dressed in buckskin tights, he struck lascivious poses at the stage apron, flagrant enough
to elicit the critics’ ridicule. Himself always the perfectionist, James found his son’s flouting of standards galling.

By 1914, when Jamie was 36, he had come perilously close to wrecking his father’s career. Although still being given small roles in James’s company, he and his father were barely on speaking terms.

“Look at him,” James was apt to jeer, “a $35,000 education and a $35-a-week earning capacity.”

Jamie’s drinking finally put an end to his career at 38. With no occupation, he devoted himself to his mother. Jim “hasn’t had a drink in almost a year and a half now!” O’Neill wrote to a friend in January 1923. “Fact, I swear to you! My mother got him to go [on] the wagon and stick—and he has stuck.”

O’Neill was in the midst of rehearsals for *The Hairy Ape* later that year when Jamie wired from California that their mother was dying. Drinking without stop after her death on February 28, Jamie was forcibly removed to the New Jersey sanitarium in May. On July 18, a friend of Jamie’s who visited him regularly wrote to Eugene: “He is very thin, pale, trembles a great deal and of course very weak. He cannot read or write so he asked me to write for him. . . . He expressed a great desire to see you.”

In the last scene of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, Jim Tyrone, blessed by Josie’s forgiving love, takes his final leave of her. Josie, “her face sad, tender, and pitying,” gazes after him. “May you have your wish and die in your sleep soon, Jim darling,” she says, “may you rest forever in forgiveness and peace.”

By the end of October 1923 (a month after the time of the play’s action) a cousin of the O’Neills who had kept in touch with the sanitarium reported to his wife, “Jim was out of his mind and getting weaker every day.” He died on November 8, his life without doubt the most cruelly blighted of the four tragic O’Neills.

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This article originally appeared in the *New York Times*, March 19, 2000, and is excerpted from Barbara and Arthur Gelb’s *O’Neill: Life with Monte Cristo* (Applause Theatre & Cinema Book Publishers, 2002). The Gelbs have also coauthored, with Ric Burns, a two-hour film biography of O’Neill, to be shown on PBS later this year. The film is a production of Steeplechase Films in association with WGBH/Boston and American Experience.
AN INTRODUCTION TO
A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN
BY VIRGINIA FLOYD

A Moon for the Misbegotten, O’Neill’s brutally honest but loving remembrance of his brother, Jamie, is a continuation of the memory play Long Day’s Journey into Night. Set over a decade later, in September 1923, two months before the brother’s actual death, the play is a requiem for Jamie, called here Jim Tyrone. In the last years of his creative life, 1939–43, when he completed his most autobiographical works, O’Neill told the tale of his tragic family in two stages. Long Day’s Journey into Night explains the early fatal familial events leading up to the actual long day in 1912 and focuses primarily on the author’s parents; A Moon for the Misbegotten takes place 11 years later after their deaths and concentrates on Jamie O’Neill. It shows what happened to Jamie in the years following the final heart-rending view of him at the end of Long Day’s Journey into Night. This was a play of “old sorrow, written in tears and blood.” A Moon for the Misbegotten is a joyous tribute to the regenerative power of love, a drama conceived and created in deep affection.

A single, simple idea from Long Day’s Journey into Night seems to have inspired the original idea for its sequel. In his Work Diary entry for October 28, 1941, O’Neill states:


In the early notes for the play, the author subordinates the “Shaughnessy idea,” developing it as a minor theme, the Irish–Yankee conflict, and focuses on dramatizing an idealized, imaginative account of the period immediately preceding his brother’s death. The decision to eulogize Jamie in the last play of the canon can be viewed as both a personal and a creative act of retribution. In previously completed and contemplated works depicting Jamie, the dramatist developed an idea contained in the 1918–20 notebook for “a play of Jim and self—showing influence of elder on younger brother.” The struggle of the brothers for dominance is depicted in earlier plays in two ways: as the battle waged by one dual-natured ascetic/Mephistophelian figure (John versus his shadow self, Loving, in Days without End) and as a long-running rivalry between two separate antithetical characters (Dion Anthony and William Brown in The Great God Brown). Only after he revealed his
brother's destructive attitude to him in the last act of *Long Day's Journey into Night* was the author purged of the bitterness, resentment, and hatred he felt for Jamie. In the sequel to this play, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, he manifests his deep compassion and love for Jamie and an awareness of Jamie's desperate loneliness.

The two late autobiographical plays are linked thematically by the “S.” (Shaughnessy) story of an Irish tenant farmer whose land is owned by James Tyrone, Sr., which Edmund relates in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Edmund outwardly and his father inwardly gloat that the “wily shanty Mick” wins a “great Irish victory” over Harker, his Standard Oil millionaire neighbor, by defending and exonerating his adventurous pigs in a trespassing dispute. The prototype for Shaughnessy is James O'Neill’s tenant, John Dolan, whose name appears in the early notes for *Long Day's Journey into Night*. In Act iv, after Edmund returns from his walk, he tells his father that he went over to see Dolan. The pigs-in-the-pond incident mentioned briefly in this work is recreated in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, labeled the “Dolan play,” in the first 1941–42 notes. Shaughnessy is now called Phil Hogan; his wealthy neighbor is named Harder, rather than Harker. Using their verbal Irish wit, Phil and his daughter, Josie, soundly defeat the pompous Yankee.

Harker in *Long Day's Journey into Night* and Harder in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* are portraits of Edward Harkness, a Standard Oil millionaire whose property actually abutted the Dolan–O’Neill land. By portraying Harkness as the pro-British Harder in the play and pitting him against the Hogans, O'Neill is writing the final episode in the Irish–Yankee conflict begun earlier in the cycle play *A Touch of the Poet*. O'Neill never forgave the snobbish Yankee New Londoners who rejected his Irish family, and he gets his revenge on them here. In *A Moon for the Misbegotten* he goes beyond his usual attack on Yankees for the indignities they inflicted on the Irish and assails one of his favorite targets, Standard Oil capitalists. As early as 1914 the author assaulted capitalism in a poem entitled “Fratricide.” In it, he raised a question that is relevant today: Should young men be sent to war to protect the interests of wealthy American industrialists? “The army of the poor must fight” such a war, the poem states; it asks,

What cause could be more asinine
Than yours, ye slaves of bloody toil?
Is not your bravery sublime
Beneath a tropic sun to broil
And bleed and groan—for Guggenheim,
And give your lives—for Standard Oil!
Phil Hogan expresses the author's revulsion, nearly three decades later, for this company when he tells Harder, "I couldn't bring myself to set foot on land bought with Standard Oil money that was stolen from the poor it ground in the dust beneath its dirty heel." O'Neill implies here that men are forced to surrender not only their lives but also their souls in the interests of wealth.

The first title O'Neill assigned _A Moon for the Misbegotten, The Man of Other Days_, indicates that its initial focal point was, as the original idea states, Jamie's "revelation of self." The person to whom he reveals himself is the fictitious Josie Hogan. Like the Night Clerk in _Hughie_, she becomes in this work "The Good Listener" and the author's persona. In the 1943 draft and the published text of the play, Jim Tyrone describes all the details preceding and following his mother's death, an accurate account of the actual events, which Jamie O'Neill must have narrated to his brother.

O'Neill uses nearly the same words to describe his brother in the two late plays. In the 1912 _Long Day's Journey into Night_, Jamie is 33; here Jim Tyrone is in his early 40s. Jim's broad-shouldered, deep-chested, healthy physique "has become soft and soggy from dissipation, but his face is still good-looking despite its unhealthy puffiness and the bags under the eyes." Again the word "Mephistophelian" is used to describe his countenance. Beneath the cocky mask of the cynical "Broadway Wise Guy," "when he smiles without sneering, he still has the ghost of a former youthful, irresponsible Irish charm—that of the beguiling ne'er-do-well, sentimental and romantic." Hogan's youngest son, Mike, sees only the alcoholic failure, the spendthrift and wastrel, and expresses hatred for Jim, "with his quotin' Latin and his high-toned Jesuit College (Fordham) education . . . he's nothing but a drunken bum who never done a tap of work in his life, except acting on the stage while his father was alive to get him jobs." In early notes for the play, Jim attributes his downfall, in part, to his hatred for acting: "It took revenge on him, and made him a bum—on and off, a ham."

Jim uses alcohol for the same reasons his mother used morphine in _Long Day's Journey into Night_: as a way to escape the pain of reality and the knowledge of what he has become. In the earlier play he despaired when he discovered that his mother had started taking morphine again after her supposed cure, identifying with her and saying, "It means so much. I'd begun to hope, if she'd beaten the game, I could, too." Like her, Jim is one of life's tragic, self-destructive wounded, a lonely, frightened outcast. . . .

The assertion may seem incongruous, but Hogan is a partial portrait of the author's father, James. Like him, he is miserly with his sons and carefully hides the whiskey he himself heartily enjoys. He is continually acting and posturing; in the second act he assumes the role of drunkard to trick Josie. Hogan has three sons, with whom he is always in con-
flict. His wife died giving birth to the third son; similarly, Ella O’Neill experienced a kind of psychological death after her third son’s birth. Hogan, outraged because God did not spare his wife, left the Catholic Church, scorning it, its clergy, and its followers. He has a type of father-son relationship with Jim Tyrone, reluctantly sharing his whiskey with him and facilely dispensing words of advice.

Both of the Hogans attempt to cheer the grieving Jim Tyrone, who, like Jamie O’Neill, has an abnormal, obsessive love for his mother. In the notes for *Days without End*, O’Neill discussed John Loving’s oedipal feelings for his mother and his inability to free himself from guilt and maternal domination. He stated that “Mother worship, repressed and turned morbid, ends by becoming Death love and longing.” After Jim’s mother dies, he longs only for death, which will reunite them. The circumstances of the fictitious mother’s death approximate those of Ella O’Neill’s. When James O’Neill died in 1920, Jamie, for his mother’s sake, reformed and gave up alcohol. The two traveled to California, where she had a stroke. Fearing that she would die, Jamie went out and got drunk. Later the mother came out of the coma briefly and looked at him reproachfully. Seeing his condition, she closed her eyes “and was glad to die.”

In the play, as in real life, the son accompanies the mother’s body on the long train trip east. Believing that she has betrayed him by dying, he seeks revenge. He reserves a drawing room on the train, stocks it with a case of bourbon, and hires a 50-dollar-a-night blonde whore for the trip. Later, after the mother is buried in New London, Jamie is filled with self-loathing whenever he is sober. In the year following her death, which precedes the action of the play, he attempts to alleviate his anguish, as he had on the train, through whiskey and the company of whores. When the play opens, he seeks a total, final oblivion in death.

The son cannot die—yet. As a lapsed Catholic, he is beset by feelings of guilt. He longs for the absolution found only in confession. The need reflects the important role Catholicism played, even unconsciously, in the lives of both the author and his brother. Their early religious training had been provided by their pious mother, even before they were sent to Catholic boarding school at the age of seven, supposedly the age of reason when one is capable of distinguishing between good and evil and of committing a sin. In the following years at school they were taught the catechism and the need to keep the ten laws of God and the six laws of the Church and its teachings. A serious infraction of the laws, mortal sin, supposedly brought spiritual death to the soul. Life was restored only through confession, penance, and absolution. The sin-confession-forgiveness syndrome is an invariable motif in the canon.
Throughout *A Moon for the Misbegotten* death imagery is used to describe Jim Tyrone. He is called “a dead man walking slow behind his own coffin” and a “damned soul” seeking “to confess and be forgiven.” He has, he believes, broken the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” and betrayed God and his mother. Having sinned against the mother, he thinks that forgiveness can come to him only through Josie, the mother figure. Nowhere in the canon is O'Neill’s statement that “in all my plays sin is punished and redemption takes place” more effectively illustrated than in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. In the early scenes of the play, however, Josie, who is deeply in love with Jim, wants a physical as well as a spiritual relationship with him. The memory of too many mornings after wretched nights with whores haunts Jim; he is repulsed by the physical and associates sex only with prostitutes and love only with the mother or maternal figure. When she finally realizes that Jim can accept only maternal love, Josie sacrifices her own desires, saying: “I have all kinds of love for you.”

The most developed section in the first scenario, entitled *The Man of Other Days*, is the “extraordinary love scene” between Josie and Jim in Act III. In this version he is not repelled by sex. On the contrary, he reveals a physical desire for Josie, making the fulfillment of it a precondition for the Dolans’ retaining their farm: “I wouldn’t accept if Harder offered a million. Won’t sell if—if you don’t repulse my advances, so to speak.” He alone, except for her father, knows “lots of men haven’t had” her as she claims. As Act III evolves and Josie’s role in the play expands, the original theme, Jim’s revelation of self, becomes part of a larger, more comprehensive plan. The extraordinary love scene shows these two misbegotten creatures to be kindred souls. The new title given the work, *The Moon Bore Twins*, indicates a shift in focus to their strange symbiotic relationship. Their explorations of the inner self, which culminate in the confession of opposing dreams and total self-revelation, bring not only self-awareness but love-awareness. Their love is not altogether hopeless here, and Jim even proposes to Josie: “I—I’d like to marry you—but I’ve nothing to offer.” Josie realizes that a future with Jim is impossible. To conceal her sorrow, she says jokingly that she “will accept Mulroy today—he’s been begging me to marry him since he tried to seduce me...he’ll give me children I can love—the first will be a son and I’ll call him Jamie.” Later, on November 12, 1941, after he decided to portray Josie and Jim as doomed lovers who are destined to be parted, the dramatist assigned the play its final title, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, noting in his Work Diary that it was “much more to the point.”

Two weeks later, on November 26, when he began the dialogue and first draft, O’Neill states: “getting great satisfaction (from) this play—flows.” He completed this draft on January 20. There is no indication in the early version that O’Neill intended to make this drama an epitaph for his brother; the work became one later in the second, 1943 draft when
the author set the play in September 1923, shortly before Jamie's death. From its inception to the completion of the first draft, the drama provided a reminiscent view of the brother, a vehicle designed, as the author states, for “Jamie's revelation of self.” Only when O'Neill started the second draft in January 1943 did the major theme of the published version emerge: Jim's attempt to find, through confession, forgiveness for the desecration of his mother's memory and his life of dissipation and to achieve, through the absolution of the mother-substitute and priestess, Josie, moral regeneration and redemption.

Several causes can be cited for O'Neill's decision to change the theme of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* in 1943 by adding a new spiritual dimension to it and to the characterizations of Jim Tyrone and Josie Hogan. As the Work Diary entries indicate, his physical condition had deteriorated; the tremor of his hand became more pronounced. To the man who could express his thoughts only by writing them—as though his arm were the channel, his hand the extension, of his creative mind—this debilitating condition signaled his demise as an artist. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* was important to the dramatist for two reasons. On the personal level, he would never be able to express, in some future play, his own forgiveness, his love, and spiritual wish-fulfillment for his brother. On the creative plane, the ghost of the doomed Mephistophelian-ascetic Jamie O'Neill, which had haunted him and his plays for so many years, would finally be laid to rest.

The final version of the play has many rich levels of meaning. There are several motifs in addition to the forgiveness-redemption theme: the Irish–Yankee conflict, the parent–child conflict, the attempt to reject reality for the comforting world of illusion supported by alcohol and pipe dreams. O'Neill tells his story in a simple, straightforward style; he uses none of the earlier technical devices, save monologues and the protective masks that are removed, layer by layer, act by act. . . .

During the "extraordinary love scene" in Act III in which Josie relinquishes physical, personal love for the spiritual, maternal type, she says, “Maybe this is the greatest of all—because it costs so much.” The same point could be made about the play itself. It is not the greatest in achievement, for it ranks in the second category with *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *A Touch of the Poet* after the masterpieces *Long Day's Journey into Night* and *The Iceman Cometh*; it did, however, require the greatest effort to complete. With his health failing, his hand trembling so that he could scarcely write, O'Neill found it difficult to finish *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. In January 1943, while working on the first act of the second draft, he noted in his Work Diary: “What I am up against now—fade out physically each day after about 3 hours—page a day because (I) work slowly even when as eager about play as I am about this—Parkinson's disease. main cause—constant strain to write.” The dramatist
completed the second act in March, the third in April, and was still reshaping the fourth on May 3, 1943, when he recorded the last entry on his creative efforts in the Work Diary.

Personal, as well as, artistic considerations motivated O'Neill to undertake the second draft of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* in 1943. In a letter to Dudley Nichols dated December 16, 1942, he points out the major flaw in the 1941–42 script: "Managed to finish the first draft but the heart was out of it. . . . There is a fine unusual tragic comedy in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* but it will have to wait until I can rewrite the lifeless post–Pearl Harbor part of it." O'Neill's primary goal in rewriting the play was to bestow on Jamie, posthumously, through Josie, the care he himself denied Jamie in his final months and the absolution his brother sought. In spite of his disparaging remarks about Jamie in *Long Day's Journey into Night*, the dramatist sincerely loved his brother and was distraught by the humiliation and pain he endured in his last illness, which began long before the date stated in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*: September 1923. Frances Cadenas, a friend, in her letter of July 18, 1923, to the playwright, describes the critical condition of Jamie, who, because of the pain in his hands, was unable to write. Similarly afflicted later as he created *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, O'Neill could not fail to identify with his brother. Probably the remembrance that he himself lacked heart and did not visit Jamie when he was ill and in need of comfort prompted the dramatist to provide his brother, in an artistic endeavor, with the personal and spiritual consolation he lacked in real life, the forgiveness extended to Jamie, through Josie, in the last line of the play: "May you rest forever in forgiveness and peace."

Through Josie, one of his most beautiful creations, O'Neill provides a valuable lesson. She sacrifices her own desires and gives Jim the spiritual love and forgiveness he needs. In modern society the individual seems to have lost the ability to love another selflessly. Josie's actions demonstrate that in a world lacking religious certitude one can, through sacrifice, bring a kind of redemption to another. Jim's search to be forgiven and to belong resembles that of every individual. The play takes on universal dimensions. Through his final view of the homeless, alienated Jim Tyrone, O'Neill seems to be saying here, as in other plays, that man can belong only in death. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is a coda in the canon; it presents O'Neill's final message: before finding release in death, man must be reconciled with God, his fellow man, and himself.

Unlike *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten* was staged before O'Neill's death. The Theatre Guild assembled a company to tour the midwest. Supposedly a pre-Broadway production, it premiered in Columbus, Ohio, on February 20, 1947. The Irish in the audience were repulsed by the coarse shanty-Irish Hogans. In Detroit the company encountered censorship problems, and the play was labeled a "dirty show." *A Moon for the Misbegotten* was not presented on Broadway until May 2, 1957, four years after
O'Neill’s death and a few months after the success of *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. The latter enabled audiences and critics to perceive the autobiographical nature of the late plays. They understood and acclaimed the 1957 production and subsequent revivals in 1968, 1973, and 1984.

*A Moon for the Misbegotten* is O’Neill’s most Irish play. Called a “strange combination comic-tragic” work by its author, it reveals the dual light-dark nature of the Irish. The hilarious pigs-in-the-pond incident in Act 1 shows the jocular, light-hearted side of the Celts. As the play unfolds and Jim Tyrone reflects on his past life, the dark introspective nature of the Irish is manifested. It is unfortunate that O’Neill did not retain the scene of “opposing dreams” from the first, 1941–42 draft. In earlier plays Jamie O’Neill is depicted as a Mephistophelian character. The dual-natured Mephistophelian-ascetic Dion Anthony in *The Great God Brown* is perhaps the most accurate portrait of Jamie in the canon. In *The Man of Other Days* Josie describes man’s opposing dreams (actually opposing natures) as “deadly enemies. It’s a fight to see which will own your life.” Reluctantly, Jamie reveals his first dream, a Lucifer dream, of “the cynic who believes in nothing.” His second dream is “kid stuff—dates back to school—catechism—the man who loves God, who gives up self and the world to worship of God and devote self to good works.” This identical dichotomy appears in the notes for *Long Day’s Journey into Night* in the description of the mother, who in Act III recalls her girlhood desire to be a nun. Her dual nature emerges in this act: the “vain happy chattering girlishness—then changing to a hard cynical sneering bitterness with a bitter biting cruelty and with a coarse vulgarity in it—the last as if suddenly poisoned by an alive demon.” Her ascetic-Lucifer dichotomy emerges in her elder son. In the last line of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, O’Neill truly forgives his tragic brother for all past misdeeds; nowhere in the canon does he absolve his mother, the most miscreated of the misbegotten O’Neills.

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1. The young Eugene formed a close bond with Jamie, who was ten years older. By age 15 Eugene has been taught important lessons in life: how to consume vast quantities of alcohol, how to romanticize sordid encounters with prostitutes, how to get the better of a tight-fisted father. Jamie was a disastrous role model; he was a hopeless alcoholic, a failed writer, a pathetic cynic, dependent on his father for financial sustenance and on his mother for emotional support.

2. In this play the name Harford, probably another deliberate variation of Harkness, is given to the wealthy Yankee family.

3. The scene demonstrates that the “moon” for the misbegotten is forgiveness, the gift Josie accords Jim. The moon is associated here with his dead virginal mother. In mythology, the moon signifies the chaste Diana; as a Christian emblem, it represents the Blessed Virgin Mary. Josie, as intermediary and priestess, had to be a virgin, for she is identified in Jim’s mind with his pure mother. The virgin mystique had to be manifested to sustain the son’s belief that he has been forgiven.

4. Mrs. Cadenas told O’Neill that after receiving his letter that morning she went to see his brother at Riverlong in Paterson, New Jersey. The doctor had diagnosed the illness as “alcoholic neuritis and that is what is causing the intense pain and possibly affecting his eyes”:
Jim's story is that he does not feel any better, and that the pain is not only in his limbs but in his hands this week. He does not like the place, the food is wretched, and that he cannot sleep during the night or day. The method of treating this neuritis is giving him ten drinks of whiskey during the day and some other kind of a drink before the whiskey which burns like fire and acts as a purgative. . . . He cannot read or write so he asked me to write for him and to tell you about his condition. He also expresses a great desire to see you. . . . If there is any change I shall telegraph you at once. I'm sure a letter from you would be very bracing. He has a male attendant who reads to him.

Eugene Gladstone O’Neill was born into the theater. His father, James O’Neill, was a successful touring actor in the last quarter of the 19th century whose most famous role was that of the Count of Monte Cristo in a stage adaptation of the Alexandre Dumas père novel. His mother, Ella, accompanied her husband back and forth across the country, settling down only briefly for the births of their first son, James, Jr., and of Eugene.

Eugene, who was born in a hotel, spent his early childhood in hotel rooms, on trains, and backstage. Although he later deplored the nightmare insecurity of his early years and blamed his father for the difficult, rough-and-tumble life the family led—a life that resulted in his mother’s drug addiction—Eugene had the theater in his blood. He was also, as a child, steeped in the peasant Irish Catholicism of his father and the more genteel, mystical piety of his mother, two influences, often in dramatic conflict, which account for the high sense of drama and the struggle with God and religion that distinguish O’Neill’s plays.

O’Neill was educated at boarding schools—Mt. St. Vincent in the Bronx and Betts Academy in Stamford, Connecticut. His summers were spent at the family’s only permanent home, a modest house overlooking the Thames River in New London, Connecticut. He attended Princeton University for one year (1906–07), after which he left school to
begin what he later regarded as his real education in “life experience.” The next six years very nearly ended his life. He shipped to sea, lived a derelict’s existence on the waterfronts of Buenos Aires, Liverpool, and New York City, submerged himself in alcohol, and attempted suicide. Recovering briefly at the age of 24, he held a job for a few months as a reporter and contributor to the poetry column of the New London Telegraph but soon came down with tuberculosis. Confined to the Gaylord Farm Sanitarium in Wallingford, Connecticut, for six months (1912–13), he confronted himself soberly and nakedly for the first time and seized the chance for what he later called his “rebirth.” He began to write plays.

ENTRY INTO THEATER
O’Neill’s first efforts were awkward melodramas, but they were about people and subjects—prostitutes, derelicts, lonely sailors, God’s injustice to man—that had, up to that time, been in the province of serious novels and were not considered fit subjects for presentation on the American stage. A theater critic persuaded his father to send him to Harvard to study with George Pierce Baker in his famous playwriting course. Although what O’Neill produced during that year (1914–15) owed little to Baker’s academic instruction, the chance to work steadily at writing set him firmly on his chosen path.

O’Neill’s first appearance as a playwright came in the summer of 1916, in the quiet fishing village of Provincetown, Massachusetts, where a group of young writers and painters had launched an experimental theater. In their tiny, ramshackle playhouse on a wharf, they produced his one-act sea play Bound East for Cardiff. The talent inherent in the play was immediately evident to the group, which that fall formed the Playwrights’ Theater in Greenwich Village. Their first bill, on November 3, 1916, included Bound East for Cardiff—O’Neill’s New York debut. Although he was only one of several writers whose plays were produced by the Playwrights’ Theater, his contribution within the next few years made the group’s reputation. Between 1916 and 1920, the group produced all of O’Neill’s one-act sea plays, along with a number of his lesser efforts. By the time his first full-length play, Beyond the Horizon, was produced on Broadway, February 2, 1920, at the Morosco Theater, the young playwright already had a small reputation.

Beyond the Horizon impressed the critics with its tragic realism, won for O’Neill the first of four Pulitzer prizes in drama—others were for Anna Christie, Strange Interlude, and Long Day’s Journey into Night—and brought him to the attention of a wider theater public. For the next 20 years his reputation grew steadily, both in the United States and abroad; after Shakespeare and Shaw, O’Neill became the English language’s most widely translated and produced dramatist.
PERIOD OF THE MAJOR WORKS

O'Neill's capacity for and commitment to work were staggering. Between 1920 and 1943 he completed 20 long plays—several of them double and triple length—and a number of shorter ones. He wrote and rewrote many of his manuscripts half a dozen times before he was satisfied, and he filled shelves of notebooks with research notes, outlines, play ideas, and other memoranda. His most-distinguished short plays include the four early sea plays, *Bound East for Cardiff, In the Zone, The Long Voyage Home,* and *The Moon of the Caribbees,* which were written between 1913 and 1917 and produced in 1924 under the overall title *S.S. Glencairn; The Emperor Jones* (about the disintegration of a Pullman porter turned tropical island dictator); and *The Hairy Ape* (about the disintegration of a displaced steamship coal stoker).

O'Neill's plays were written from an intensely personal point of view, deriving directly from the scarring effects of his family's tragic relationships—his mother and father, who loved and tormented each other; his older brother, who loved and corrupted him and died of alcoholism in middle age; and O'Neill himself, caught and torn between love for and rage at all three.

Among his most-celebrated long plays is *Anna Christie,* perhaps the classic American example of the ancient “harlot with a heart of gold” theme; it became an instant popular success. O'Neill's serious, almost solemn treatment of the struggle of a poor Swedish-American girl to live down her early, enforced life of prostitution and to find happiness with a likable but unimaginative young sailor is his least-complicated tragedy. He himself disliked it from the moment he finished it, for, in his words, it had been “too easy.”

The first full-length play in which O'Neill successfully evoked the starkness and inevitability of Greek tragedy that he felt in his own life was *Desire under the Elms.* Drawing on Greek themes of incest, infanticide, and fateful retribution, he framed his story in the context of his own family's conflicts. This story of a lustful father, a weak son, and an adulterous wife who murders her infant son was told with a fine disregard for the conventions of the contemporary Broadway theater. Because of the sparseness of its style,
its avoidance of melodrama, and its total honesty of emotion, the play was acclaimed immediately as a powerful tragedy and has continued to rank among the great American plays of the 20th century.

In *The Great God Brown*, O’Neill dealt with a major theme that he expressed more effectively in later plays—the conflict between idealism and materialism. Although the play was too metaphysically intricate to be staged successfully in 1926, it was significant for its symbolic use of masks and for the experimentation with expressionistic dialogue and action—devices that since have become commonly accepted both on the stage and in motion pictures. In spite of its confusing structure, the play is rich in symbolism and poetry, as well as in daring technique, and it became a forerunner of avant-garde movements in American theater.

O’Neill’s innovative writing continued with *Strange Interlude*. This play was revolutionary in style and length: when first produced, it opened in late afternoon, broke for a dinner intermission, and ended at the conventional hour. Techniques new to the modern theater included spoken asides or soliloquies to express the characters’ hidden thoughts. The play is the saga of Everywoman, who ritualistically acts out her roles as daughter, wife, mistress, mother, and platonic friend. . . .

One of O’Neill’s enduring masterpieces, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, represents the playwright’s most complete use of Greek forms, themes, and characters. Based on the *Oresteia* trilogy by Aeschylus, it is itself three plays in one. To give the story contemporary credibility, O’Neill set the play in the New England of the Civil War period, yet he retained the forms and the conflicts of the Greek characters: the heroic leader returning from war; his adulterous wife, who murders him; his jealous, repressed daughter, who avenges him through the murder of her mother; and his weak, incestuous son, who is goaded by his sister first to matricide and then to suicide.

Following a long succession of tragic visions, O’Neill’s only comedy, *Ah, Wilderness!*, appeared on Broadway in 1933. Written in a lighthearted, nostalgic mood, the work was inspired in part by the playwright’s mischievous desire to demonstrate that he could portray the comic as well as the tragic side of life. Significantly, the play is set in the same place and period, a small New England town in the early 1900s, as his later tragic masterpiece, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. Dealing with the growing pains of a sensitive, adolescent boy, *Ah, Wilderness!* was characterized by O’Neill as “the other side of the coin,” meaning that it represented his fantasy of what his own youth might have been, rather than what he believed it to have been (as dramatized later in *Long Day’s Journey into Night*).

*The Iceman Cometh*, the most complex and perhaps the finest of the O’Neill tragedies, followed in 1939, although it did not appear on Broadway until 1946. Laced with subtle
religious symbolism, the play is a study of man’s need to cling to his hope for a better life, even if he must delude himself to do so.

Even in his last writings, O’Neill’s youth continued to absorb his attention. The posthumous production of *Long Day’s Journey into Night* brought to light an agonizingly autobiographical play, one of O’Neill’s greatest. It is straightforward in style but shattering in its depiction of the agonized relations between father, mother, and two sons. Spanning one day in the life of a family, the play strips away layer after layer from each of the four central figures, revealing the mother as a defeated drug addict, the father as a man frustrated in his career and failed as a husband and father, the older son as a bitter alcoholic, and the younger son as a tubercular, disillusioned youth with only the slenderest chance for physical and spiritual survival.

O’Neill’s tragic view of life was perpetuated in his relationships with the three women he married—two of whom he divorced—and with his three children. His elder son, Eugene O’Neill, Jr. (by his first wife, Kathleen Jenkins), committed suicide at 40, while his younger son, Shane (by his second wife, Agnes Boulton), drifted into a life of emotional instability. His daughter, Oona (also by Agnes Boulton), was cut out of his life when, at 18, she infuriated him by marrying Charlie Chaplin, who was O’Neill’s age.

Until some years after his death in 1953, O’Neill, although respected in the United States, was more highly regarded abroad. Sweden, in particular, always held him in high esteem, partly because of his publicly acknowledged debt to the influence of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg, whose tragic themes often echo in O’Neill’s plays. In 1936 the Swedish Academy gave O’Neill the Nobel Prize for Literature, the first time the award had been conferred on an American playwright.

O’Neill’s most ambitious project for the theater was one that he never completed. In the late 1930s he conceived of a cycle of 11 plays, to be performed on 11 consecutive nights, tracing the lives of an American family from the early 1800s to modern times. He wrote scenarios and outlines for several of the plays and drafts of others but completed only one in the cycle—*A Touch of the Poet*—before a crippling illness ended his ability to hold a pencil. An unfinished rough draft of another of the cycle plays, *More Stately Mansions*, was published in 1964 and produced three years later on Broadway, in spite of written instructions left by O’Neill that the incomplete manuscript be destroyed after his death.

O’Neill’s final years were spent in grim frustration. Unable to work, he longed for his death and sat waiting for it in a Boston hotel, seeing no one except his doctor, a nurse, and his third wife, Carlotta Monterey. O’Neill died as broken and tragic a figure as any he had created for the stage.
ASSESSMENT

O’Neill was the first American dramatist to regard the stage as a literary medium and the only American playwright ever to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. Through his efforts, the American theater grew up during the 1920s, developing into a cultural medium that could take its place with the best in American fiction, painting, and music. Until his *Beyond the Horizon* was produced, in 1920, Broadway theatrical fare, apart from musicals and an occasional European import of quality, had consisted largely of contrived melodrama and farce. O’Neill saw the theater as a valid forum for the presentation of serious ideas. Imbued with the tragic sense of life, he aimed for a contemporary drama that had its roots in the most powerful of ancient Greek tragedies—a drama that could rise to the emotional heights of Shakespeare. For more than 20 years, both with such masterpieces as *Desire under the Elms*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and *The Iceman Cometh* and by his inspiration to other serious dramatists, O’Neill set the pace for the blossoming of the Broadway theater.

AN O’NEILL CHRONOLOGY

“NONE OF US CAN HELP THE THINGS THAT LIFE HAS DONE TO US.”
Mary Tyrone, Long Day’s Journey into Night

James O’Neill, Eugene’s father, was born in Kilkenny, Ireland. James’s father, Thomas, brought his wife and eight children to Buffalo, New York, in 1854, then left them and returned to Ireland. Working in a machine shop for 50 cents a day, James was often hired in the evenings as an extra for visiting theater companies. He first joined the [acting] company of Edwin Forrest in 1866, and by 1874 had performed Othello and Iago with Edwin Booth. In 1877 James married Mary Ellen “Ella” Quinlan, a convent-educated girl from an affluent Cleveland family. James O’Neill was best known for the part of Edmond Dantes in The Count of Monte Cristo, which he played some 6,000 times.

1846 James O’Neill, Sr., is born in Kilkenny, Ireland.
1850 The O’Neill family migrates to the United States.
1855 Edward O’Neill, James’s father, returns to Ireland without his family.
1857 Mary Ellen (Ella) Quinlan is born in New Haven, CT.
1865 James begins working in theater.
1877 James O’Neill marries Ella Quinlan in New York City.
1878 “Jamie” (James, Jr.) O’Neill is born in San Francisco.
1883 Edmund O’Neill is born in St. Louis, MO. James, Sr., begins starring in The Count of Monte Cristo, which he will continue to do through 1912.
1884 James and Ella purchase Monte Cristo Cottage, named after James O’Neill’s famous role, in New London, CT.
1885 Edmund O’Neill dies of measles.
1888 October 16: Eugene Gladstone O’Neill is born in a New York hotel room overlooking what would become Times Square. It is a difficult birth and his mother is ill for some time. The doctor prescribes morphine, to which Ella remains addicted for the next 25 years.
1888–95 O’Neill spends his early childhood traveling the country with his parents and Jamie on his father’s performing tours. The family summers at Monte Cristo Cottage.
1895–1906 Eugene is educated at a series of boarding schools. Jamie introduces him to Broadway chorus girls. In 1903, the young Eugene discovers his mother’s addiction to morphine and begins to drink heavily.

1906 O’Neill enters Princeton University. Although he skips classes and refuses to complete assignments, he pursues a rigorous independent study of diverse literary and philosophical works. He is dismissed after a year for “poor academic standing.”

1907 His father arranges a job for him in a mail-order house.

1909 Eugene falls in love with Kathleen Jenkins, a New York society girl. In an attempt to separate his son from Jenkins, who is pregnant with Eugene’s child, James O’Neill sends Eugene to Honduras, where he will join a mining expedition to prospect for gold. Two weeks before he departs, Eugene secretly marries Jenkins.

1910 Stricken with malaria, O’Neill returns to New York. Kathleen has a son, also christened Eugene. O’Neill soon leaves again, for Buenos Aires, on the Charles Racine, a Norwegian sailing ship.

1911 O’Neill again returns to New York and takes a room at Jimmy the Priest’s, a waterfront saloon; its seamy world of down-and-out characters will inspire The Iceman Cometh and Anna Christie.

I arrived a gentleman—so called—and wound up a bum on the docks in fact.

. . . There are times now when I feel sure I would have been a playwright no matter what happened, but when I remember Buenos Aires, and the fellow down there who wanted me to be a bandit, I’m not so sure.

1912 Depressed by his failure as a poet and husband, O’Neill attempts suicide. He briefly joins, in a menial position, the theater company his father and brother are with. James O’Neill retires the role of the Count of Monte Cristo, his fortune made by the rights to the play. When the show closes for the season, the family is together under one roof in their New London summer home. Jenkins divorces Eugene. He is diagnosed with tuberculosis and goes to a state sanatorium in Shelton, Connecticut. He stays there only two days. On Christmas Eve, he enters Gaylord Farm Sanatorium, in Wallingford, Connecticut, where he begins to read widely in dramatic literature, particularly the plays of Strindberg, Ibsen, and the Greeks. O’Neill begins writing and completes at least one play.

It was reading [Strindberg’s] plays that above all first gave me the vision of what modern drama could be and first inspired me with the urge to write for the theater.
myself. The influence of Strindberg runs clearly through more than a few of my plays
and is plain for everyone to see.

1913 He is discharged and returns to his family’s summer home.

1914 Continues writing and by autumn has completed eleven one-act and two full-length
plays, including Bound East for Cardiff. His father finances the publication of O’Neill’s first
collection of writings, Thirst, and Other One-Act Plays. He is accepted into George Pierce
Baker’s playwriting workshop at Harvard. Ella O’Neill enters a convent and successfully
overcomes her morphine addiction.

1915–16 Spends a year living in Greenwich Village and drinking in “The Hell Hole.” Meets
the pioneering group of artists and writers working in Provincetown, including Djuna
Barnes, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and William Carlos Williams. His Bound East for Cardiff
and Thirst are staged in a converted fishing wharf theater. His next play, Before Breakfast,
is staged by the Provincetown Players at the Playwrights’ Theatre in New York. The group
stages nine more of his plays over the next three years.

1918 Marries Agnes Boulton, a young widow and writer.

1919 Their son, Shane, is born.

1920 Beyond the Horizon, O’Neill’s Broadway debut, is staged at the Morosco Theatre and
receives the Pulitzer Prize for drama. James O’Neill, Sr., dies.

My father’s death leaves a big hole in my life. He and I had become great pals in the
last two years. . . . Yes, it was the greatest satisfaction he knew that I had made good
in a way dear to his own heart. And I thank “whatever gods may be” that Beyond
came into its own just when it did and not too late for him. He was in a box at the
opening matinee and wept his eyes out.

The premiere of The Emperor Jones at the Playwrights’ Theatre brings O’Neill to world
prominence.

1921 Meets Eugene, Jr., the son from his first marriage, now 11, for the second time. They
afterwards remain in touch.

1922 Anna Christie wins O’Neill his second Pulitzer Prize. The Hairy Ape is staged. His
mother dies. Jamie, who was very close to her and has been on the wagon for some time,
reverts to heavy drinking.
People talk of the “tragedy” in [my plays], and call it “sordid,” “depressing,”
“pessimistic”—the words usually applied to anything of a tragic nature. But tragedy,
I think, has the meaning the Greeks gave it. To them it brought exaltation, an urge
toward life and ever more life. It roused them to deeper spiritual understandings and
released them from the petty greeds of everyday existence. When they saw a tragedy
on the stage they felt their own hopeless hopes ennobled in art.

1923 Jamie dies, aged 45, of chronic alcoholism. O’Neill creates the Experimental Theatre
with critic Kenneth Macgowan and set designer Robert Edmond Jones (both leaders of
the Provincetown Players).

1924 All God’s Chillun Got Wings incurs censorship problems because of its depiction of an
interracial marriage. Desire under the Elms is staged.

1925 Daughter, Oona, is born in Bermuda.

1927 While summering with his family in Maine, O’Neill falls in love with actress Carlotta
Monterey.

1928 Marco Millions and Strange Interlude open on Broadway; Strange Interlude wins his
third Pulitzer Prize and becomes the first American drama to reach the best-seller list
when published. O’Neill leaves Agnes and the children to go on a world tour with
Carlotta. In Shanghai goes on a two-week bender and is treated for alcoholism.

1929 Marries Carlotta in Paris and they rent Château du Plessis near Tours.

1931 Returns to the United States for production of Mourning Becomes Electra trilogy at the
Guild Theatre. It is a huge success.

1933 Ah, Wilderness! opens to excellent reviews.

1936 Awarded Nobel Prize for literature, but refuses to attend the ceremony. (O’Neill
remains the only American playwright to have received the Nobel Prize for literature.)
Hospitalized for appendicitis and nervous exhaustion.

1937–44 O’Neill and Carlotta spend early 1937 living in a San Francisco hotel, then, drawn to the
climate and privacy of the San Ramon Valley, build and move into Tao House, a 158-acre private
retreat in Danville, California. There O’Neill writes *The Iceman Cometh* (1939), *Long Day’s Journey into Night* (1941), *Hughie* (1942), *A Touch of the Poet* (1942), *More Stately Mansions* (1942) and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1943). In 1943, 18-year-old daughter Oona marries Charlie Chaplin, 54. O’Neill disapproves and severs connection with her. (Both Oona and Shane will be disinherited by their father; neither will attend his funeral.) General decline in his health, including an increasingly severe hand tremor, eventually ends O’Neill’s writing career.


1946 Attends rehearsals for *The Iceman Cometh*—his first opening since 1934.

*The people in that saloon were the best friends I’ve ever known. . . . Their weakness was not an evil. It is a weakness found in all men. . . . It is a play about pipe dreams. And the philosophy is that there is always one dream left, one final dream, no matter how low you have fallen, down there at the bottom of the bottle. I know because I saw it.*

1947 *A Moon for the Misbegotten* opens in Columbus, Ohio, and in Detroit police try to close the play for obscenity (O’Neill agrees to make minor changes to the script, but the producers close the production after two weeks); it will not be presented on Broadway until 1957.

1948 Shane arrested for possession of heroin.

1950 Eugene, Jr., aged 40, kills himself.

1953 November 27: O’Neill, aged 65, dies after years of worsening illness.

1956 Carlotta authorizes world premiere in Stockholm of *Long Day’s Journey into Night* (in Swedish); Broadway premiere, directed by Jose Quintero, in November. O’Neill’s fourth Pulitzer Prize.
“AND HIM WAY UP IN THE WORLD, A NOBLE SERGEANT OF THE BRIDGEPORT POLICE.”

The train from New London to Bridgeport, Connecticut, still travels the 65 miles or so along the northern shore of the Long Island Sound.

Irish immigration to the United States increased drastically in the mid 19th century as a result of the Great Hunger of 1845–49, which lead to the starvation of more than a million Irish and the emigration of millions more. By 1920, 4.5 million Irish immigrants had settled in the United States. “No Irish need apply” was routinely attached to job notices, and other forms of discrimination against the impoverished Irish immigrants were widespread. In time, however, the new immigrants found jobs as laborers, tenant farmers, and occasionally skilled workmen. When the mayor’s offices of major East Coast cities began forming municipal police forces in the 1860s, jobs were handed out as political favors. Party machines like Tammany Hall in New York City ensured a favorable voter turnout among the new immigrants by hiring them to keep the peace and support local political initiatives. Burly Irish cops became a common sight on the streets of cities from Boston and New York to Chicago.

“WITH HIS HIGH-TONED JESUIT COLLEGE EDUCATION”

Jim Tyrone’s literary bent and fondness for Latin, as well as his quiet-spoken politeness “even when he’s drunkest,” speaks well of his Jesuit education. With 28 affiliated coeducational colleges and universities in the United States today, the Jesuits are still known for providing a classically based education that emphasizes logic, literature, intellectual and moral discipline, and a commitment to Catholic values. Though O’Neill doesn’t say where Jim Tyrone studied, we can presume that in this, as in much else, he followed the path of his namesake and model, Eugene’s older brother Jamie. Jamie O’Neill began his classical Catholic education as a “Minim of Notre Dame,” a grammar school-aged boarding student at the famous university in South Bend, Indiana, where he was taught by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. From Notre Dame, Jamie went to study with the Jesuits at Georgetown Preparatory School in Washington, D.C., and then at St. John’s Preparatory School and University (now Fordham University) in the Bronx. Jamie’s careers at Notre Dame, Georgetown, and Fordham all ended “without the appropriate conditions of ful-
fillment,” though he won numerous academic prizes in classics and literature. In fact, his educational prowess has been described as “nothing short of brilliant,” and he’s said to have earned “the most extensive classical training of any of the O’Neills” (Edward J. Shaughnessy [1991], The Eugene O’Neill Review).

“BUT DON’T TRY TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT AND FILL ME WITH BLARNEY.”
When Blarney Castle in County Cork was besieged by the British, late in the reign of Elizabeth I, the chief of the castle, Dermot MacCarthy, smooth-talked the queen’s emissary, Sir George Carew, with flattering cajolments and promises to turn over his castle as a show of loyalty to the crown. But something always seemed to come up at the last minute to prevent MacCarthy from surrendering the castle. As the excuses became more extravagant and implausible, the queen tired of MacCarthy’s smooth talk and declared: “This is all Blarney, he never means what he says, and never does what he promises!” In honor of MacCarthy, the term “blarney” has come to mean an ability to influence and coax with fair words and soft speech without giving offense or losing advantage. A triangular stone set high in the southern wall of Blarney Castle and inscribed by Dermot MacCarthy is said to transfer MacCarthy’s gift of gab to anyone who kisses it.

“SURE, YOU COULD GIVE JACK DEMPSEY HIMSELF A RUN FOR HIS MONEY.”
Jack Dempsey was a hero of the Irish in America as one of a number of Irish boxers who held the title of “heavyweight champion of the world.” The son of a poor mining family from Colorado, Dempsey was known as a brutal fighter who left few opponents standing at the end of a bout. During the fight that won him the championship in 1919, Dempsey not only knocked Jess Willard out in the third round, but also left him with a broken jaw, two broken ribs, a closed eye, and a partial loss of hearing. Dempsey was heavyweight champion from 1919 to 1926, when he lost the title to Gene Tunney.

“CRUMMY CALF”
In the 18th century, “crummy” was used as an adjective meaning “plump” or “fat.” Later it came to mean “dirty” or “lousy” (lice-infested), and eventually “cheap” or “worthless” (as in a “crummy joint”).

“AND IN A FEW WEEKS YOU’D HAVE HIM A DIRTY PROHIBITIONIST.”
Long before the passage and implementation of the 18th Amendment in 1920, prohibitionists demanded that the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages be outlawed in the United States. In fact, prohibitionists played an important part in American political life
throughout the second half of the 19th century, offering significant support to the Republican Party in its early years. Prohibitionists established their own Prohibition Party during the election of 1872, and continued to run reform candidates who blamed “Demon Rum” for all of society’s ills for several decades. “Too busy preaching temperance to have time for a drink,” as Hogan says, some argued for prohibition as a way of curbing what they called the immorality and lawlessness of new immigrants like the Irish and Italians. When prohibition was finally nationalized by the 18th Amendment, and the consumption of alcohol became a crime, saloons went underground as illegal speakeasies. Supplying the speakeasies with alcoholic beverages required sophisticated organization, and “organized crime” was born.

“OUR BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBOR, HARDER, THE STANDARD OIL THIEF”

Harder, whom Hogan calls “Standard Oil’s sappiest child,” is, as heir to a “Robber Baron” fortune, as much a criminal in Hogan’s mind as the English who usurped the land of Irish peasants in the 16th and 17th centuries, or those who traded bits of food for the land of starving farmers during the Great Hunger. In fact, the terms Hogan uses to describe the crimes of Standard Oil are more applicable to the old country than the new (“land bought with Standard Oil money that was stolen from the poor it ground in the dust beneath its dirty heel—land that’s watered with the tears of starving widows and orphans.”) This is not to suggest that the Standard Oil “Robber Barons” were innocent. In fact, by the end of the 19th century, Standard Oil had come to symbolize a ruthless pursuit of profit without regard for fairness or the law. As such big capital monopolies as Standard Oil and Carnegie Steel developed an insatiable appetite for profits, public discontent over their monopoly practices led eventually to passage of the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890, aimed at curbing some of their most egregious offenses. This did not prevent oil companies from participating in such outlandish 20th-century scams as the Teapot Dome Scandal of 1922.

“FORTUNATE SENEX ERGO TUA RURA MANEBUNT / ET TIBI MAGNA SATIS, QUAMVIS LAPIS OMNIA NUDUS.”

The great Roman poet Virgil, in the first of his *Eclogues* (short pastoral poems that Virgil wrote between 42 and 35 B.C.E.), speaks to a poetic idealization of the noble Roman farmer. While Jamie’s schoolboy translation is imaginative and colorful, a more accurate rendering of these lines might be: “So, happy old man, these fields will still be yours, / and sufficient for your needs, though bare stones cover all.”
“THE DUKE OF DONEGAL”
Phil Hogan comes from County Donegal (Jim later calls him “the Donegal lark”) in northwestern Ireland on the Donegal Bay. This remote and beautiful part of Ireland was, in the 19th century, a place of dire poverty and hardship that led to high levels of emigration to North America and elsewhere. County Donegal is bordered by County Tyrone, which is the name O'Neill gave his fictionalized family in A Long Day’s Journey into Night and A Moon for the Misbegotten.

“ONE OF THOSE HEEBIE-JEEBIE NIGHTS”
The word “heebie-jeebies” to describe a state of mental anxiety, extreme nervousness, jitters, or the creeps first appeared in 1923 in one of American cartoonist Billy De Beck’s Barney Google cartoons in the New York American. De Beck is also credited with coining the term “hotsy-totsy.” A few years later, in 1926, both Louis Armstrong and Ethel Waters recorded the song “Heebie Jeebies,” which refers to a dance of the same name:

Say, I’ve got the heebies,
I mean the jeebies,
Talking about
The dance, the heebie jeebies,
Do, because they’re boys,
Because it pleases me to be joy!

“VIRGIN QUEEN OF IRELAND”
When Jamie commends Josie for her “great beauty and great strength and great pride and great goodness,” it is as if he were recalling such legendary Irish figures as Cathleen ni Houlihan, the female personification of Ireland and symbol of Irish patriotism. During times of trouble, Cathleen is said to walk across Ireland to gather the support of men and boys to aid her in battle. As she gathers her supporters, she gathers spirit and grows from old and haggard to young and beautiful.

Cathleen’s foremother is perhaps Maeve (also Medbh or Medbha), the legendary queen of Connacht. Her name means “intoxication,” and she appears originally to have been a personification of the spirit of Ireland, the goddess whom any king must ritually marry before his office is recognized. She was said to have been the wife of nine Irish kings and that only her mate could be called the true king of Ireland. Maeve is immortalized in Scene II of w. b. Yeats’s play The Countess Cathleen:
A man, they say,
Loved Maeve the Queen of all the invisible host,
And died of his love nine centuries ago.
And now, when the moon’s riding at the full,
She leaves her dancers lonely and lies there
Upon that level place, and for three days
Stretches and sighs and wets her long pale cheeks.

... She sleeps high up on wintry Knock-na-rea
In an old cairn of stones; while her poor women
Must lie and jog in the wave if they would sleep
Being water born—yet if she cry their names
They run up on the land and dance in the moon
Till they are giddy and would love as men do,
And be as patient and as pitiful.
But there is nothing that will stop in their heads,
They’ve such poor memories, though they weep for it.
Oh, yes, they weep; that’s when the moon is full.

“ONE OF THE KINGS OF OUR REPUBLIC BY DIVINE RIGHT OF INHERITED SWAG”
Hogan points to one of the great ironies of American democracy in the early years of the 20th century, when a strict hierarchy of inherited wealth and privilege was masked by assumptions about the classless society of the New World. In the 1850s “swag” was slang for a peddler’s wares or a thief’s booty, which were often assumed to be the same thing. By the end of the 19th century the word came to refer to any kind of unlawful, unearned gain or acquisition.

“WELL, IT SEEMS HE HAS AN ICE POND ON HIS ESTATE.”
In the days before the harnessing of electricity, spring-fed ice ponds were tended year round and harvested during the winter. Cut into limestone or lined with concrete to preserve the freshness of the ice and avoid contamination, ice ponds were harvested in midwinter, when the ice was at its most solid. The ice was marked and cut with an ice plough into cakes of the proper size, which were then stored in a special icehouse for use in kitchen iceboxes and in drinks throughout the year. Commercial ice ponds supplied the needs of large cities.
“IT MUST BE THE BAD FAIRIES.”
The ancient druidic tribes of Ireland worshipped the trees and lakes, stones and animals of
the Irish landscape, which was said to be inhabited by a wide array of fairies, including
black-robed dullahans, pookas, merrows, services, banshees, the Donegal Grogoch, and, of
course, leprechauns. The coming of Christianity to Ireland did little to disturb the habits
and habitats of these traditional woodland beings, who continue to be spoken of with quiet
reverence in the Irish countryside.

“NIX, JOSIE.”
Like “heebie-jeebies,” the word “nix” (“to reject or say no to”) is part of the hip Broadway
lingo of the day, or what Josie calls Jim’s “Broadway blather,” associated with the fast life
of the big city. The word (probably derived from the German “nichts” meaning “nothing”)
was popularized by the entertainment trade paper Variety. Every since its launch in 1905
Variety has prided itself in the distinctive lingo of wacky abbreviations and unique takes on
the English language that gives the paper its coded “insiders-only” feel. For example, the
famous Variety headline “Sticks Nix Hick Pix,” accompanied an article about rural
audiences not being interested in attending films about rural life.

“IF YOU BLEW GABRIEL’S HORN.”
As one of God’s champions, the archangel Gabriel, who “stand[s] in the presence of God”
(Luke 1:19), is often considered the messenger of divine comfort. Twice he was sent to
Daniel to interpret visions (Daniel 8:16 and 9:21–27) and twice to announce miraculous

As a messenger, Gabriel has been traditionally depicted with a horn. Some assume that
he is the sixth angel of the book of Revelations (9:14), who will blow his trumpets to pro-
claim the end of time. According to the apocryphal Revelations of St. John,

Then all the human race shall die, and there shall not be a living man upon all
the earth. . . . [The Lord will] send forth [his] angels, and they shall take the
ram’s horns that lie upon the cloud; and Michael and Gabriel shall go forth out
of the heaven and sound with those horns, as the prophet David foretold, with
the voice of a trumpet of horn. And the voice of the trumpet shall be heard
from the one quarter of the world to the other; and from the voice of that trum-
pet all the earth shall be shaken, as the prophet foretold, and at the voice of the
bird every plant shall arise; that is, at the voice of the archangel all the human
race shall arise.
“THERE’S NEVER A PROMISE OF GOD OR MAN GOES NORTH OF TEN THOUSAND BUCKS.”

Jim paraphrases Rudyard Kipling’s long poem about northern seal hunters, “Rhyme of the Three Sealers.” In Kipling’s poem, the “dog-toothed” skinner Reuben Paine declares:

“Yes, skin for skin, and all that he hath a man will give for his life;
But I’ve six thousand skins below, and Yeddo Port to see,
And there’s never a law of God or man runs north of Fifty-Three:
So go in peace to the naked seas with empty holds to fill,
And I’ll be good to your seal this catch, as many as I shall kill!”

“OH, THE PRATIES THEY GROW SMALL, / OVER HERE, OVER HERE.”

The small-growing “praties” of Hogan’s “mournful Irish song” are the sickly, blighted potatoes of the years of the Great Hunger of 1845–49. This traditional song, also known as the “Famine Song,” refers to the years of blight that destroyed the overplanted potato crop of Ireland that fed the poor people of that country. Nearly a million Irish died of starvation following the blight, and millions more fled to the New World in overcrowded “coffin ships.” While a ninth of the population of Ireland starved to death, a plentiful harvest of expensive foodstuffs was exported to England.

“THOU WAS NOT BORN FOR DEATH, IMMORTAL BIRD.”

Here and later, Jim quotes the sixth stanza of Keats’s famous “Ode to a Nightingale,” which he dismisses as “Ode to Phil the Irish Nightingale”:

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call’d him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.
“AND BABY’S CRIES CAN’T WAKEN HER / IN THE BAGGAGE COACH AHEAD.”
These lines, reminiscent of Jamie’s cross-country train journey with his mother’s corpse, come from a traditional folk tune called “The Baggage Coach Ahead,” also known as “In the Luggage Van Ahead.” The tune occasionally turned up on vaudeville stages as a novelty number that included cowboy yodeling. The situation in the play referenced by this song is acutely remembered from O’Neill’s own life. In 1922, he had accompanied his brother Jamie and his mother to Los Angeles to sell some property left by his father, who had died in 1920. In Los Angeles his mother died of a brain tumor and Eugene and his brother had to bring her body back east to be buried. Jamie, who had quit drinking after the death of his father to help his widowed mother, immediately began to drink again and spent the five-day train ride drunk in his compartment with a woman he’d met, whom he later called “a blonde pig.” Suffering from alcoholic psychosis, Jamie died the following year in a sanatorium.

“HE’S PUNK COMPANY”
By the late 19th century the word “punk” had shifted from a noun describing a prostitute to an adjective meaning “in bad health” and eventually to a word meaning simply “bad” or “of poor quality.”

“THAT’S HONEST-TO-GOD OLD BONDED BOURBON.”
Bonded bourbon whiskey has been aged and bottled according to the “Bottled-in-Bond” Congressional Act of 1897. It is straight bourbon whiskey, made by a single distillery, aged in government-supervised warehouses for at least four years, and bottled at 100 proof. Bonded bourbon is entitled to be labeled as “bottled in bond” and sealed with the U.S. government’s green strip stamp. Cognoscenti claim that 100-proof bourbon is far superior to the 80-proof bourbons popular today, and favor the standards maintained by such bonded bourbons as Old Grand-Dad, Old Fitzgerald, Old Taylor, and Old Forester, the first bourbon to be sold in bottles rather than casks.

“TOM LOMBARDO, THE BOOTLEGGER, GAVE HIM A CASE FOR LETTING HIM HIDE A TRUCKLOAD IN OUR BARN WHEN THE AGENTS WERE AFTER HIM.”
Bootleggers transported the illegal alcohol distilled by moonshiners as well as that illegally imported from Canada or Mexico. In this case Tom Lombardo managed to get hold of a truckload of bonded bourbon apparently distilled before Prohibition began and stored in a government warehouse. This would undoubtedly be a prime commodity. Distillers like
Old Forester continued to produce bourbon even during the Prohibition years, but these bottles were clearly marked “for medicinal purposes only.”

“LET THE DEAD PAST BURY ITS DEAD.”
When, in the gospel of Luke, Jesus calls upon an apostle to follow him, the man asks for time first to bury his father. Jesus responds to him: “Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Luke, 9:60). Henry Wadsworth Longfellow played upon this notion in his poem “A Psalm of Life” when he wrote:

Trust no Future, howe’er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o’erhead!

“HAD AN IDEA SHE COULD ROLL ME, I GUESS.”
Eric Partridge, in his Dictionary of Slang (8th ed., 1984), dates general slang use of the word “roll,” meaning “to steal from a man bemused by drink, from an unconscious person, or from one engaged in sexual intimacies,” in the United States to the early 1920s, though he cites uses of “to roll” meaning “to rob a drunk” among Australian sailors in the 1890s.

“I’D RATHER HAVE ONE LIGHT ON BROADWAY THAN ALL THE MOONS SINCE RAMSES WAS A PUP.”
Ramses the Great was the third king (1279–13 B.C.E.) of the 19th dynasty. He lived to be 96 years old and is said to have had 200 wives and concubines, 96 sons, and 60 daughters.

“YOU AND YOUR LOVERS, MESSALINA—WHEN YOU’VE NEVER—”
Valeria Messalina (17–48 C.E.) was 15 when she was forced by the emperor Caligula to marry his successor, Claudius. She was his third wife; he was 50. Caligula had a peculiar sense of humor. After Claudius became emperor, Messalina gained a reputation as not only a major political player but also as a player in other arenas. She had a notorious series of affairs with gladiators, dancers, actors, heads of state, and pretty much anyone else she fancied, cuckolding her husband so often that it became a joke in Rome. Before long she became known for the orgies she threw, in which she forced Roman ladies to prostitute themselves with other men and women in front of their husbands. She even consummated a bigamist marriage herself with Gaius Silius before the guests at the wedding reception. Messalina was said to have challenged the prostitute Scylla to a competition to see who
could satisfy more customers. Scylla quit at dawn after servicing 25; Messalina continued on “exhausted but undaunted by the sweat,” as the poet Juvenal reported in his sixth Satire.

**“PRIDE IS THE SIN BY WHICH THE ANGELS FELL.”**

The source of the line—“Pride is the sin by which the angels fell; / nor was mankind able to resist temptation”—has stumped commentators for years. Perhaps it comes from a poem by John Wilmot, second earl of Rochester (1647–80). If so, the joke is on the good Jesuits who educated Jim Tyrone, since the earl of Rochester was known more for his pornographic poetry than his theological ruminations. Whatever the source, the sentiment that “Pride goeth before the fall” (Proverbs 16:18) is familiar from such classics as Milton’s Paradise Lost, in which the sin of pride leads to the fall from paradise of Lucifer, the most beautiful of the angels, who became the greatest of the devils in Hell. In shaping his great poem, Milton took inspiration from the Book of Isaiah: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the pit” (Isaiah 14:12–15).

**“WE’LL SIT DOWN. THAT’S IT—WITH MY ARM AROUND YOU. NOW LAY YOUR HEAD ON MY BREAST THE WAY YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO DO.”**

The posture that Josie describes is that of the pietà, a classical form used to depict the Virgin Mary holding the dead body of Jesus in her arms after he has been taken down from the cross. The most famous pietà is Michelangelo’s extraordinary 1499 work of harmony and beauty on display in St. Peter’s Basilica, in the Vatican. Similarities have been noted between the simplicity and elegance of Michelangelo’s depiction of a grieving virgin mother and her dead son and the tenderness of this moment in O’Neill’s play.

**“CHRIST, IN A MINUTE YOU’LL START SINGING ‘MOTHER MACHREE’!”**

The maudlin Irish ballad “Mother Machree,” honoring the silver-haired mother who toils for her children, was written in 1910 by American-born Ernest Ball, who also wrote “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling” a few years later. Ballads like “Mother Machree” and “Danny Boy” came to represent the sentimental tendencies of the Irish drunk:

Sure, I love the dear silver that shines in your hair,
And the brow that’s all furrowed and wrinkled with care.
I kiss the dear fingers so toilworn for me.
Oh, God bless you and keep you, Mother Machree.

A 1928 movie called *Mother Macree*, about a poor Irish immigrant to America who works in a carnival to send her son to school, featured a young John Wayne in one of his first film roles.

“IT IS THE VERY ERROR OF THE MOON: / SHE COMES MORE NEARER EARTH THAN SHE WAS WONT, / AND MAKES MEN MAD.”
Jim quotes from Othello’s speech to Emilie after killing Desdemona (*Othello* v.2).

“But I was desolate and sick of an old passion, / When I awoke and found the dawn was gray.”
Jim quotes from the end of a lesser-known poem by the lesser-known English poet Ernest Dowson (1867–1900), whom Yeats once described as “timid, silent, and a little melancholy.”
Fittingly, Dowson died of alcoholism in 1900 at the age of 33. The poem Jim quotes is Dowson’s first and most famous: “Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonae sub Regno Cynarae,” (“I am no more the man I was in the reign of the Good Cynara”), which depicts a lover trying, but failing, to put aside his feelings for a former lover.

“I LIKE BELASCO BETTER. RISE OF CURTAIN, ACT-FOUR STUFF.”
The great San Francisco–born theatrical director, playwright, and innovator David Belasco, “the Bishop of Broadway,” was famous throughout the first decades of the 20th century for, among other things, his spectacular depictions of sunrises and sunsets onstage.
Using silk color screens and advances in lighting instrumentation, Belasco’s sunrises were said to rival the best that nature had to offer.
For director Laird Williamson, the poetic landscape of Eugene O’Neill’s playwriting is familiar territory. Director of A.C.T.’s acclaimed 1999 production of O’Neill’s Long Day’s Journey into Night (which also featured Marco Barricelli in the role of a younger James Tyrone), Williamson returns to A.C.T. to stage O’Neill’s final drama.

Williamson emphasizes that A Moon for the Misbegotten is essentially a love story, as well as a story about a family struggling to eke out a simple existence in a barren world. During rehearsals of A Moon for the Misbegotten at A.C.T., Williamson elaborated on the journey he took to this play and the joys of directing an O’Neill classic for A.C.T.

To start at the beginning would be, for some, to start with Long Day’s Journey into Night. How has your experience directing that play for A.C.T. influenced your decision to work on A Moon for the Misbegotten now?

In the process of working on Long Day’s Journey, I got to know the characters extremely well and came to understand where they all stood in the configuration of the Tyrone family. Of course Jamie figures very prominently in both plays. One of the interesting aspects to me is that in the first play James Tyrone, Jr., was called “Jamie,” and in this play he’s called “Jim.” I think Jamie was a diminutive given to delineate James Tyrone, Jr., from the senior, and that what O’Neill is really saying in this play is that he has become a “Jim” in his own right. I think Moon is more O’Neill’s personal response to the man than was Long Day’s Journey. There’s also less bitterness toward Jamie, or Jim, in Moon, and there’s a much more forgiving attitude toward him. Originally, in the early drafts of this play, O’Neill had made a note that this was to be about the relationship between himself and his brother. That’s not really what it turned out to be, however; it’s much more about his brother.

In addition to the character of James Tyrone, what else carries over into Moon from Long Day’s Journey?

The story of Phil Hogan and the pigs going into Harder’s ice pond is mentioned in Long Day’s Journey—although the Hogan character is named Shaughnessy—so it obviously made an impression. I think these are people that O’Neill was fond of, in a very Irish kind
of way, and that story links the two plays. The actual person on whom both Shaughnessy
and Hogan were based was called Dirty Dolan. There’s something about both Phil and
Josie that’s very Irish. I think this is in part a connection with O’Neill’s Irish roots. He was
attracted to that hard-scrabbled kind of world in which they lived.

COULD YOU SAY MORE ABOUT THAT “HARD-SCRABBLED WORLD”? FOR
EXAMPLE, THE IMAGERY OF ROCKS ABOUNDS IN THIS PLAY—ON THE FARM
ITSELF, IN THE RELATIONSHIPS, IN REFERENCES TO IRLAND. WHAT DO YOU
THINK O’NEILL IS DOING BY SETTING THE STAGE THIS WAY?
Someone once said that the Hogans’ farm might as well have been transported directly
from Ireland. It’s a very hard life they lead, as was the life led by most Irish immigrants
early in the last century. Jim Tyrone’s father owned that farm, and now he is the landlord
of it. I think a part of it is a statement that the farm isn’t worth very much, it’s not very
productive. There’s quite an issue made in the play about the sale of the farm and how
much it’s worth.

THE MAJOR SCENES OF THIS PLAY TAKE PLACE OUTDOORS, AS OPPOSED TO
LONG DAY’S JOURNEY, WHICH TAKES PLACE ENTIRELY WITHIN THE TYRONES’
FAMILY HOME. YET A SIMILAR FEELING OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA LOOMS IN
BOTH PLAYS. HOW DO YOU THINK THE SETTING INFLUENCES THE EMOTION
IN THE PLAY?
The comedic relationship between Phil and Josie is very prominent in A Moon for the
Misbegotten, and there’s even joking between them and Jim. There’s a very healthy feeling
of play, even in the oncoming confrontation between Jim and Josie. Jim’s expiation of his feelings of guilt are also very interesting. *Moon* has been called a joyous play, in that it ends up being really about the regenerative power of love. So we reach a kind of spiritual apotheosis, after going through a kind of dark night of Jim’s soul. The play is extremely interesting in the way that it connects the tragic and the comic.

**DO YOU CONSIDER THIS A RELIGIOUS PLAY?**
I do think the play is religious, but I think it goes beyond the Catholic Church. Tyrone is drawn to the Hogans’ farm; there’s almost a ritualistic quality about that space, and Josie’s kind of the priestess to whom he confesses. O’Neill was certainly influenced by Irish mythology and the tales of Yeats, and, for me, there is very much a subliminal idea of Irish mythology that runs through the play, in terms of who these people are.

**ONE CRITIC HAS REFERRED TO JOSIE AS AN “EARTH MOTHER,” AND O’NEILL EMPHASIZES IN HIS STAGE DIRECTIONS THAT SHE “IS ALL WOMAN,” DESPITE HER ENORMOUS, EVEN MANNISH STRENGTH. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS JOSIE, THE ONLY WOMAN ON THE HOGAN FARM, OWNED HER FEMININITY?**
I think she’s a fascinating person, a person capable of tremendous compassion and self-sacrifice. She shows enormous concern for her brothers, whom she has seen exploited by their father. Helping each of them in turn escape from the farm has meant much more work for her, but it was more important to her that they be able to go on to some fuller life, rather than being trapped on the farm.

*Long Day’s Journey* is very much a long day’s journey into darkness, and I think everyone—characters, actors, and audience alike—included in that play long for the onset of the quiet solitude of night. In *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, I think there’s also a sense of time passing. There’s this beautiful, playful relationship between father and daughter during the day, and then we progress into night, when the ghosts and spirits come out, followed by the sense of a new dawn.

**ONE OF THE THINGS THE MOON DOES IS IT PULLS: IT PULLS THE TIDES, IT PULLS PEOPLE INTO LUNACY. IN THIS PLAY, THE MOON PULLS OUT JIM’S STORY. IN WHAT SENSE DOES JOSIE GIVE HIM WHAT HE NEEDS—DOES SHE FORGIVE HIM?**
I think she does. What O’Neill does is he uses the story to create Josie for his brother, James. She is the one who forgives, the one who is finally able to love Jim for himself. She is the woman who will disassociate love from sex.
The moon has great power in this play, almost a mystical power. Under the moon there is a "lunacy" that occurs, but I think in the long run the moon is a benevolent power. Then O'Neill symbolically brings out the dawn, which is almost like an Easter morning, with its sense of redemption and resurrection.

I’m reminded again of the earth mother/goddess image, because Jim comes to Josie longing “to lie with [his] head on her breast.” I think the contrast of the imagery of the fertile breast and the sterile, rocky land gives a broader sense of Jim’s hope. But what is the role of the father in this play? Why is it Josie can take him on, when none of her brothers can?

Phil loves Josie very much. Behind all of his irritable banter, there’s a great, deep, abiding love for her. I think on the one hand, he is very much like the elder James O’Neill: he’s stingy, he’s demanding, but he’s also got another side, which I think is very playful, like a jester or trickster. All through the play he’s playing at variations on trickery.

What is the role of the tricks and the banter throughout the play?

I think O’Neill had a great affection for these characters and was charmed by their devilishness and the way they play tricks. I think Jim Tyrone comes to the farm instinctively, almost as a curative place, because he enjoys being around these people. There is nobody else in his life anymore with whom he enjoys spending time. His relationships with whores and tarts are unrewarding; the people at the inn have become tedious. The play is infused with his incredible loneliness, which brings him to this curative spot.

So where does Jim go when he leaves the farm at dawn?

The real Jim [O’Neill] will die a month later. I imagine he goes back to the inn—and this is obviously a great discussion to have with the actor—but maybe he goes back to New York City. Historically, O’Neill’s brother was suffering from alcoholic neutropenia (a blood disorder), so he was actually very sick. O’Neill doesn’t bring that out to the fullest extent in the play, except to make Jim Tyrone an alcoholic on the verge of death. I think the important thing for O’Neill was that he was able to give his brother this curative experience. He was able to bless him with this play. I don’t know if he thought any further than that. Obviously Jim Tyrone will be dead in a short while.
Josie has given him so much, but what does she gain throughout the night? What does she come away with at dawn?

I think there’s a sense of just going on; she will have to go on and do her work. Josie has genuinely longed to be sexually desired, but she’s never felt worthy of it. I think she finds that she can be sexually desired, and that might be enough for her. I think she’s also learned a great appreciation for spiritual love.

Let’s switch gears for a moment and talk about this production. What’s been your process so far, particularly with respect to the casting and the design?

Obviously Marco [Barricelli] has been onboard since the beginning. This play is something Marco has wanted to do, and that’s certainly one of the primary reasons for doing it. My job was particularly to get the three others in place, and I was able to get Raye Birk to come back, which is great. We hunted around for the woman to play Josie, who is rather hard to find, and ended up casting someone [Robin Weigert] in whom we were very interested from the beginning.

The work on the set, of course, began months ago. You’ll find that the house as a physical structure is not literally represented. Most of the action takes place outside, on the porches and such, and the house becomes more of a ritual platform. There are a few pieces of furniture and a few uprights, and that’s about it. We created the roof using the imagery of a prehistoric bird or an eagle flying overhead. We wanted the entire set, including the boulders, to be connotative of this unique place. And, of course, the moon.

“And of course the moon”?

We’ve been having meetings and meetings about the moon. One thing that happens is that sometimes the characters will be sitting in a place where moonlight would not realistically be hitting their faces. But after a while there’s this feeling that the moon is everywhere. There are no walls to the house, the roof is hovering way over head, and the moon takes on a supernatural feeling at this point.

Is O’Neill himself anywhere in this play? Do we see the Eugene character popping up anywhere in the same sense that we do in Long Day’s Journey into Night—particularly if we’re looking at this play as a latter-day expression of forgiveness for his brother?

O’Neill is hardly a character here. What started out as possibly being a study of the relationship between him and his brother didn’t come through in the end. The only thing that
pops up is one’s knowledge of O’Neill and of *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, which is the background you’re aware of on some level as you watch the play.

**How essential is knowledge of *Long Day’s Journey* for an appreciation of this play?**

I don’t think it’s necessary at all, nor is knowledge of the O’Neill family. I think this play stands on its own. Little things O’Neill did—like naming the family in *Moon* after County Tyrone in Northern Ireland, where the O’Neills came from—are interesting, but not crucial. What does come through in the play is the Irish mythology and the tales of Yeats, who influenced O’Neill himself quite a bit. There is a quote from a critic, oddly enough, which I think says a lot about the plot and structure of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*: “It is wise to keep in mind while watching O’Neill’s play that he is an Irish poet.”

**What else have you been thinking about in preparing for this production?**

O’Neill mentions at some point that the play is “written in blood and tears,” and I’m attracted to that Irish sensibility in the play. I love its mythical feelings, its roots. For me, I’d like to bring out the uplifting quality of the play. When you mention this play casually to somebody, they sometimes say, “Oh my god, how heavy.” Well, there is heaviness, there is pain in it, but I hope more than that comes through. There should be a feeling of having come through a miracle and seeing the other side.
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Describe the Hogans’ farm. What does the land look like; how big is it; what crops does it produce? Are the Hogans successful farmers?

2. Why doesn’t Josie leave? Why does she help her brothers leave? What does she gain by staying on the farm?

3. What kind of man is Phil Hogan? What kind of father is he? Do you think he loves his daughter?

4. What kind of man is Jim Tyrone? What has he done in his life that he regrets so much? Who is T. Stedman Harder and what does he represent? What was the social dynamic in 1920s New England, and what is the class problem presented by these rival neighbors?

5. Describe the scene when Hogan comes home drunk. What is he doing by acting drunk? How does Josie play into his plan?

6. What happens during the night while Josie and Jim are sitting outside? What do you think Jim needs to be happy? Does he find it? What does Josie want? What does each of them gain from the other?

7. Why does this play take place at night? What does the moon symbolize and how does it affect each of the characters?

8. Who are the “misbegotten,” and why? What do you think Eugene O’Neill thought about each of the characters in this play? What is the central conflict in this play and how does it represent the work of this great American playwright?

9. What do you think happens to Jim Tyrone after the end of the play? What does Josie do? How do their lives change? How does this night under the moon affect their destinies?
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION . . .


Eugene O'Neill Foundation. Tao House. http://www.eugeneoneill.org. Tao House, in Danville, California (where O'Neill wrote A Moon for the Misbegotten), is open to visitors; for information you can also call 925.838.0249. For information about Monte Cristo Cottage in New London, Connecticut, which is also open to visitors, call 860.443.0051.


