In 1921, the only year separating the first and final editions of “A Few Figs from Thistles,” The Measure, a poetry magazine, published a review by Frank Hill, who charged the book with the quality of being a collection of lyrics “in which the author is spying upon herself” (25). Millay’s collection, however, possess the kind of humanitarian truth that transcends one human being alone. It is obvious that Millay’s work addresses the depths of the human spirit in a way that resembles the reporting of a spy. Millay’s collection, however, speaks such universal truth that it cannot reasonably be seen as one person spying on itself, and instead must be recognized as one person spying on the universe. Millay’s work

When “First Fig” and “Midnight Oil” are juxtaposed, it is clear that they are, in essence, doppelgangers. There is overwhelming evidence for their pairing on the grounds of formal elements alone. Both poems, for instance, exist within four end-stopped lines that address time and the night, allude to light (“First Fig” in its use of candle and “Midnight Oil” in its title”), contain a dash after the word friend (third line), and follow a simple “ABAB” abbreviated rhyme scheme. Their similarities, however potent, do not speak quite as loudly as their differences. While on the surface the two pieces match up nearly perfectly in form, the emotional connotations of “First Fig” are the antithesis to those of “Midnight Oil,” which is why their juxtaposition is so relevant in understanding relativity as a theme in *A Few Figs from Thistles.* The attitude of the poet-speaker in “First Fig” is one best described as whimsical acceptance; the lines of this opening piece reflect more than anything a belief in the celebration of the time one has and a blatant support of the carpe diem mentality. In contrast, “Midnight Oil,” in approaching the same conceptual ideas sets a rather defiant tone when its poet-speaker challenges the universe to bring forth the night and attempt to cut “each day to half its length.” It is, to this poet-speakers mind, a matter simply of taking control of time, while its counterpart, the poet-speaker of “First Fig,” exudes an exuberant amount of interest in not taking control of, but appreciating, the “lovely light” in the time that he or she possesses. The very notion that two fundamentally different takes on the same ideas can co-exist within one collection sheds light on Millay’s thematic truth. While two people, or even one person at different times, can live through a single event, the experience itself is relative to the person experiencing it and that person’s relationship with the role that he or she is playing in his or her world.   
 At the beginning of the collection it would seem that the role that the poet-speaker plays in his or her world is radically different from the role that the poet-speaker in “Midnight Oil” plays in his or hers. By this token, the order of the pieces in relation to the other poems in Millay’s collection, also contribute to their significance thematically. One can look at the collection as a life of its own. In starting said life with “First Fig” in all of its glorious optimism, readers begin the journey of life within the context of the collection as one ought to begin all things, free of outside burden. In fact, the only burden placed upon the reader at the beginning of the collection is that of a double ended candle and the poem reassures us that even that ought not to be a burden. “Midnight Oil,” however, carries the burdens of all its poetic predecessors. The concept of time and its transience takes on an entirely new meaning when it is explored after such emotionally charged pieces as “The Prisoner”, “Grown-Up” and “Portrait by a Neighbor.” The perception of time and life itself has, by the time a sequential reader reaches “Midnight Oil,” changed relative to the experience they have gained in the reading of other poems. When the theme of relativity is applied to one’s own life it holds up quite soundly within the context of this understanding. For instance, relative to the proverbial stage in one’s life, the perception, significance and consideration of an event may vary, and two different people with separate and varying burdens or emotional baggage will view the world through different scopes relative to their own milestone predecessors. The pairing of “Midnight Oil” and “First Fig”, nay, Millay’s collection as a whole, is simply a reflection of that universal truth.   
 Such a reflection could not be recognized, of course, if it weren’t for the presence of the other 21 poems in the book. Each of the pieces explore moment s