



THE PENGUIN POETS

*T. S. Eliot*

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A SELECTION BY  
THE AUTHOR

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THE PENGUIN POETS  
D4  
SELECTED POEMS  
T. S. ELIOT

# SELECTED POEMS

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T. S. ELIOT

PENGUIN BOOKS  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
FABER AND FABER

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**PRUFROCK**  
**and Other Observations**  
**1917**

For Jean Verdenal, 1889-1915  
mort aux Dardanelles

*Or puoi la quantitate  
comprender dell' amor ch' a te mi scalda,  
quando dismento nostra vanitate,  
trattando l' ombre come cosa salda.*

## *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

*S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse  
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,  
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.  
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo  
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il rero,  
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.*

Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherised upon a table;  
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:  
Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .  
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'  
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,  
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time  
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street  
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;  
There will be time, there will be time  
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;  
There will be time to murder and create,  
And time for all the works and days of hands

That lift and drop a question on your plate;  
Time for you and time for me,  
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time  
To wonder, 'Do I dare?' and, 'Do I dare?'  
Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—  
[They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!']  
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,  
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—  
[They will say: 'But how his arms and legs are thin!']  
Do I dare  
Disturb the universe?  
In a minute there is time  
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all—  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;  
I know the voices dying with a dying fall  
Beneath the music from a farther room.  
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—  
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,  
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,  
Then how should I begin  
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?  
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—  
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare  
[But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!]  
Is it perfume from a dress

That makes me so digress?  
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.  
And should I then presume?  
And how should I begin?

. . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets  
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes  
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!  
Smoothed by long fingers,  
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,  
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.  
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,  
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?  
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,  
Though I have seen my head [grown slightly bald] brought in  
upon a platter,  
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;  
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,  
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and  
snicker,  
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,  
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,  
Would it have been worth while,  
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,  
To have squeezed the universe into a ball  
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,  
To say: 'I am Lazarus, come from the dead,  
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all'—  
If one, settling a pillow by her head,  
Should say: 'That is not what I meant at all.  
That is not it, at all.'

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
Would it have been worth while,  
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,  
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail  
    along the floor—

And this, and so much more?—

It is impossible to say just what I mean!

But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a  
    screen:

Would it have been worth while

If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,

And turning toward the window, should say:

    ‘That is not it at all,

    That is not what I meant, at all.’

. . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do

To swell a progress, start a scene or two,

Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,

Deferential, glad to be of use,

Politic, cautious, and meticulous;

Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;

At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—

Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves

Combing the white hair of the waves blown back

When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea

By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown  
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

## *Portrait of a Lady*

*Thou hast committed—  
Fornication: but that was in another country,  
And besides, the wench is dead.*

The Jew of Malta

### I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon  
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—  
With ‘I have saved this afternoon for you’;  
And four wax candles in the darkened room,  
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,  
An atmosphere of Juliet’s tomb  
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.  
We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole  
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.  
‘So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul  
Should be resurrected only among friends  
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom  
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room.’  
—And so the conversation slips  
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets  
Through attenuated tones of violins  
Mingled with remote cornets  
And begins.  
‘You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends,  
And how, how rare and strange it is, to find  
In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends,  
[For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? you are not blind!  
How keen you are!]  
To find a friend who has these qualities,  
Who has, and gives  
Those qualities upon which friendship lives.  
How much it means that I say this to you—  
Without these friendships—life, what *cauchemar!*’

Among the windings of the violins  
And the quiet

And the anacrusis

Of cracked cornets

Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins  
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,  
Capricious monotone

That is at least one definite 'false note'.

—Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,

Admire the monuments,

Discuss the late events,

Correct our watches by the public clocks.

Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks.

## II

Now that lilacs are in bloom

She has a bowl of lilacs in her room

And twists one in her fingers while she talks.

'Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know

What life is, you who hold it in your hands';

(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)

'You let it flow from you, you let it flow,

And youth is cruel, and has no remorse

And smiles at situations which it cannot see.'

I smile, of course,

And go on drinking tea.

'Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall

My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,

I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world

To be wonderful and youthful, after all.'

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune

Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:

'I am always sure that you understand

My feelings, always sure that you feel,

Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.

You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.

You will go on, and when you have prevailed

You can say: at this point many a one has failed.

But what have I, but what have I, my friend,

To give you, what can you receive from me?

To give you, what can you receive from me:

Only the friendship and the sympathy  
Of one about to reach her journey's end.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends . . .'

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends  
For what she has said to me?

You will see me any morning in the park  
Reading the comics and the sporting page.

Particularly I remark

An English countess goes upon the stage.

A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,

Another bank defaulter has confessed.

I keep my countenance,

I remain self-possessed

Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired

Reiterates some worn-out common song

With the smell of hyacinths across the garden

Recalling things that other people have desired.

Are these ideas right or wrong?

### III

The October night comes down; returning as before

Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease

I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door

And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

'And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?

But that's a useless question.

You hardly know when you are coming back,

You will find so much to learn.'

My smile falls heavily among the bric-a-brac.

'Perhaps you can write to me.'

My self-possession flares up for a second;

*This* is as I had reckoned.

'I have been wondering frequently of late

(But our beginnings never know our ends!),

Why we have not developed into friends.'

I feel like one who smiles and turning shall remark

I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark  
Suddenly, his expression in a glass.  
My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

‘For everybody said so, all our friends,  
They all were sure our feelings would relate  
So closely! I myself can hardly understand.  
We must leave it now to fate.  
You will write, at any rate.  
Perhaps it is not too late.  
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends.’  
And I must borrow every changing shape  
To find expression . . . dance, dance  
Like a dancing bear,  
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.  
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance—

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,  
Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose;  
Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand  
With the smoke coming down above the housetops;  
Doubtful, for a while  
Not knowing what to feel or if I understand  
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon . . .  
Would she not have the advantage, after all?  
This music is successful with a ‘dying fall’  
Now that we talk of dying—  
And should I have the right to smile?

## *Preludes*

### I

The winter evening settles down  
With smell of steaks in passageways.  
Six o'clock.  
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.  
And now a gusty shower wraps  
The grimy scraps  
Of withered leaves about your feet  
And newspapers from vacant lots;  
The showers beat  
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,  
And at the corner of the street  
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.  
And then the lighting of the lamps.

### II

The morning comes to consciousness  
Of faint stale smells of beer  
From the sawdust-trampled street  
With all its muddy feet that press  
To early coffee-stands.  
With the other masquerades  
That time resumes,  
One thinks of all the hands  
That are raising dingy shades  
In a thousand furnished rooms.

### III

You tossed a blanket from the bed,  
You lay upon your back, and waited;  
You dozed, and watched the night revealing  
The thousand sordid images

Of which your soul was constituted;  
They flickered against the ceiling.  
And when all the world came back  
And the light crept up between the shutters  
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,  
You had such a vision of the street  
As the street hardly understands;  
Sitting along the bed's edge, where  
You curled the papers from your hair,  
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet  
In the palms of both soiled hands.

#### IV

His soul stretched tight across the skies  
That fade behind a city block,  
Or trampled by insistent feet  
At four and five and six o'clock;  
And short square fingers stuffing pipes,  
And evening newspapers, and eyes  
Assured of certain certainties,  
The conscience of a blackened street  
Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled  
Around these images, and cling:  
The notion of some infinitely gentle  
Infinitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;  
The worlds revolve like ancient women  
Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

## *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*

Twelve o'clock.  
Along the reaches of the street  
Held in a lunar synthesis,  
Whispering lunar incantations  
Dissolve the floors of memory  
And all its clear relations,  
Its divisions and precisions,  
Every street lamp that I pass  
Beats like a fatalistic drum,  
And through the spaces of the dark  
Midnight shakes the memory  
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,  
The street-lamp sputtered,  
The street-lamp muttered,  
The street-lamp said, 'Regard that woman  
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door  
Which opens on her like a grin.  
You see the border of her dress  
Is torn and stained with sand,  
And you see the corner of her eye  
Twists like a crooked pin.'

The memory throws up high and dry  
A crowd of twisted things;  
A twisted branch upon the beach  
Eaten smooth, and polished  
As if the world gave up  
The secret of its skeleton,  
Stiff and white.  
A broken spring in a factory yard,  
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left  
Hard and curled and ready to snap.

Half-past two,  
The street-lamp said,  
'Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,

Slips out its tongue  
And devours a morsel of rancid butter.’  
So the hand of the child, automatic,  
Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along the  
quay.

I could see nothing behind that child’s eye.  
I have seen eyes in the street  
Trying to peer through lighted shutters,  
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,  
An old crab with barnacles on his back,  
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,  
The lamp sputtered,  
The lamp muttered in the dark.  
The lamp hummed:  
‘Regard the moon,  
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,  
She winks a feeble eye,  
She smiles into corners.  
She smooths the hair of the grass.  
The moon has lost her memory.  
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,  
Her hand twists a paper rose,  
That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,  
She is alone  
With all the old nocturnal smells  
That cross and cross across her brain.’  
The reminiscence comes  
Of sunless dry geraniums  
And dust in crevices,  
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,  
And female smells in shuttered rooms,  
And cigarettes in corridors  
And cocktail smells in bars.

The lamp said,  
‘Four o’clock,  
Here is the number on the door.  
Memory!  
You have the key,

The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair.

Mount.

The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,

Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life.'

The last twist of the knife.

**POEMS**  
**1920**

## *Gerontion*

*Thou hast nor youth nor age  
But as it were an after dinner sleep  
Dreaming of both.*

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,  
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.  
I was neither at the hot gates  
Nor fought in the warm rain  
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,  
Bitten by flies, fought.  
My house is a decayed house,  
And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner,  
Spawnd in some estaminet of Antwerp,  
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.  
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;  
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.  
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,  
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.  
I an old man,  
A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders, 'We would see a sign!'  
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,  
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvenescence of the year  
Came Christ the tiger

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering Judas,  
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk  
Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero  
With caressing hands, at Limoges  
Who walked all night in the next room;  
By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;  
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room  
Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp  
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant shuttles  
Weave the wind. I have no ghosts,  
An old man in a draughty house  
Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now  
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors  
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,  
Guides us by vanities. Think now  
She gives when our attention is distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions  
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late  
What's not believed in, or if still believed,  
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon  
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with  
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think  
Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices  
Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues  
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.  
These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at  
last  
We have not reached conclusion, when I  
Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last  
I have not made this show purposelessly  
And it is not by any concitation  
Of the backward devils.

I would meet you upon this honestly.  
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom  
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.  
I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it  
Since what is kept must be adulterated?  
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:  
How should I use them for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations  
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,  
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,  
With pungent sauces, multiply variety  
In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,  
Suspend its operations, will the weevil  
Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled  
Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear  
In front of the door. Call against the mind, in the mind, the spirit

in fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits  
Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,  
White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,  
And an old man driven by the Trades  
To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house,  
Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

***Burbank with a Baedeker:  
Bleistein with a Cigar***

*Tra-la-la-la-la-la-laire—nil nisi divinum stabile  
est: caetera fumus—the gondola stopped, the old  
palace was there, how charming its grey and pink  
—goats and monkeys, with such hair too!—so the  
countess passed on until she came through the  
little park, where Niobe presented her with a  
cabinet, and so departed.*

Burbank crossed a little bridge  
Descending at a small hotel;  
Princess Volupine arrived,  
They were together, and he fell.

Defunctive music under sea  
Passed seaward with the passing bell  
Slowly: the God Hercules  
Had left him, that had loved him well.

The horses, under the axletree  
Beat up the dawn from Istria  
With even feet. Her shuttered barge  
Burned on the water all the day.

But this or such was Bleistein's way:  
A saggy bending of the knees  
And elbows, with the palms turned out,  
Chicago Semite Viennese.

A lustreless protrusive eye  
Stares from the protozoic slime  
At a perspective of Canaletto.  
The smoky candle end of time

Declines. On the Rialto once.  
The rats are underneath the piles.  
The jew is underneath the lot.  
Money in furs. The boatman smiles,

Princess Volupine extends  
A meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand  
To climb the waterstair. Lights, lights,  
She entertains Sir Ferdinand

Klein. Who clipped the lion's wings  
And flea'd his rump and pared his claws?  
Thought Burbank, meditating on  
Time's ruins, and the seven laws.

## *Sweeney Erect*

*And the trees about me,  
Let them be dry and leafless: let the rocks  
Groan with continual surges; and behind me  
Make all a desolation. Look, look, wench!*

Paint me a cavernous waste shore  
Cast in the unstilled Cyclades,  
Paint me the bold anfractuous rocks  
Faced by the snarled and yelping seas.

Display me Aeolus above  
Reviewing the insurgent gales  
Which tangle Ariadne's hair  
And swell with haste the perjured sails.

Morning stirs the feet and hands  
(Nausicaa and Polypheme).  
Gesture of orang-outang  
Rises from the sheets in steam.

This withered root of knots of hair  
Slitted below and gashed with eyes,  
This oval O cropped out with teeth:  
The sickle motion from the thighs

Jackknives upward at the knees  
Then straightens out from heel to hip  
Pushing the framework of the bed  
And clawing at the pillow slip.

Sweeney addressed full length to shave  
Broadbottomed, pink from nape to base,  
Knows the female temperament  
And wipes the suds around his face.

(The lengthened shadow of a man  
Is history, said Emerson  
Who had not seen the silhouette  
Of Sweeney straddled in the sun)

Tests the razor on his leg  
Waiting until the shriek subsides.  
The epileptic on the bed  
Curves backward, clutching at her sides.

The ladies of the corridor  
Find themselves involved, disgraced,  
Call witness to their principles  
And deprecate the lack of taste

Observing that hysteria  
Might easily be misunderstood;  
Mrs. Turner intimates  
It does the house no sort of good.

But Doris, towelled from the bath,  
Enters padding on broad feet,  
Bringing sal volatile  
And a glass of brandy neat.

## *A Cooking Egg*

*En l'an trentiesme de mon aage  
Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues . . .*

Pipit sate upright in her chair  
Some distance from where I was sitting;  
*Views of the Oxford Colleges*  
Lay on the table, with the knitting.

Daguerreotypes and silhouettes,  
Her grandfather and great aunts,  
Supported on the mantelpiece  
*An Invitation to the Dance.*

. . . .

I shall not want Honour in Heaven  
For I shall meet Sir Philip Sidney  
And have talk with Coriolanus  
And other heroes of that kidney.

I shall not want Capital in Heaven  
For I shall meet Sir Alfred Mond.  
We two shall lie together, lapt  
In a five per cent. Exchequer Bond.

I shall not want Society in Heaven,  
Lucretia Borgia shall be my Bride;  
Her anecdotes will be more amusing  
Than Pipit's experience could provide.

I shall not want Pipit in Heaven:  
Madame Blavatsky will instruct me  
In the Seven Sacred Trances;  
Piccarda de Donati will conduct me.

. . . .

But where is the penny world I bought  
To eat with Pipit behind the screen?  
The red-eyed scavengers are creeping

From Kentish Town and Golder's Green;

Where are the eagles and the trumpets?

Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.

Over buttered scones and crumpets

Weeping, weeping multitudes

Droop in a hundred A.B.C.'s.

## *The Hippopotamus*

*And when this epistle is read among you, cause  
that it be read also in the church of the  
Laodiceans.*

The broad-backed hippopotamus  
Rests on his belly in the mud;  
Although he seems so firm to us  
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,  
Susceptible to nervous shock;  
While the True Church can never fail  
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err  
In compassing material ends,  
While the True Church need never stir  
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach  
The mango on the mango-tree;  
But fruits of pomegranate and peach  
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice  
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,  
But every week we hear rejoice  
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day  
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;  
God works in a mysterious way—  
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing  
Ascending from the damp savannas,  
And quiring angels round him sing  
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean  
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,  
Among the saints he shall be seen  
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,  
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,  
While the True Church remains below  
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

## *Whispers of Immortality*

Webster was much possessed by death  
And saw the skull beneath the skin;  
And breastless creatures under ground  
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.

Daffodil bulbs instead of balls  
Stared from the sockets of the eyes!  
He knew that thought clings round dead limbs  
Tightening its lusts and luxuries.

Donne, I suppose, was such another  
Who found no substitute for sense,  
To seize and clutch and penetrate;  
Expert beyond experience,

He knew the anguish of the marrow  
The ague of the skeleton;  
No contact possible to flesh  
Allayed the fever of the bone.

. . . .

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye  
Is underlined for emphasis;  
Uncorseted, her friendly bust  
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

The couched Brazilian jaguar  
Compels the scampering marmoset  
With subtle effluence of cat;  
Grishkin has a maisonnette;

The sleek Brazilian jaguar  
Does not in its arboreal gloom  
Distil so rank a feline smell  
As Grishkin in a drawing-room.

And even the Abstract Entities

Circumambulate her charm;  
But our lot crawls between dry ribs  
To keep our metaphysics warm.

## *Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service*

*Look, look, master, here comes two religious caterpillars.*  
The Jew of Malta

Polyphiloprogenitive  
The sapient sutlers of the Lord  
Drift across the window-panes.  
In the beginning was the Word.

In the beginning was the Word.  
Superfetation of tò ěv,  
And at the mensual turn of time  
Produced enervate Origen.

A painter of the Umbrian school  
Designed upon a gesso ground  
The nimbus of the Baptized God.  
The wilderness is cracked and browned

But through the water pale and thin  
Still shine the unoffending feet  
And there above the painter set  
The Father and the Paraclete.

. . . .

The sable presbyters approach  
The avenue of penitence;  
The young are red and pustular  
Clutching piaculative pence.

Under the penitential gates  
Sustained by staring Seraphim  
Where the souls of the devout  
Burn invisible and dim.

Along the garden-wall the bees  
With hairy bellies pass between  
The staminate and pistillate,

Blest office of the epicene.

Sweeney shifts from ham to ham  
Stirring the water in his bath.  
The masters of the subtle schools  
Are controversial, polymath.

## *Sweeney Among the Nightingales*

ὄμοι, πέπληγμαι χαιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσο.

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees  
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,  
The zebra stripes along his jaw  
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon  
Slide westward toward the River Plate,  
Death and the Raven drift above  
And Sweeney guards the horned gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog  
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;  
The person in the Spanish cape  
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth  
Overturns a coffee-cup,  
Reorganised upon the floor  
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown  
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;  
The waiter brings in oranges  
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown  
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;  
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch  
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape  
Are suspect, thought to be in league;  
Therefore the man with heavy eyes  
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears  
Outside the window, leaning in,  
Branches of wistaria  
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct  
Converses at the door apart,  
The nightingales are singing near  
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood  
When Agamemnon cried aloud,  
And let their liquid siftings fall  
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

# THE WASTE LAND

1922

‘Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego  
ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla  
pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent:  
Σίβυλλα τί θέλειξ; respondebat illa:  
ἀποθαυεῖν θέλω.’

For Ezra Pound  
*il miglior fabbro*

## I. *The Burial of the Dead*

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.  
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee  
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,  
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten, 10  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.  
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.  
And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,  
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,  
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.  
In the mountains, there you feel free.  
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, 20  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only  
There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),  
And I will show you something different from either  
Your shadow at morning striding behind you  
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;  
I will show you fear in a handful of dust. 30

*Frisch weht der Wind  
Der Heimat zu.  
Mein irisch Kind,  
Wo weilest du?*

'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;  
'They called me the hyacinth girl.'  
—Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,

Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not  
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither  
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing, 40  
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.  
*Öd' und leer das Meer.*

Madame Sosostriis, famous clairvoyante,  
Had a bad cold, nevertheless  
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,  
With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,  
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,  
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)  
Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,  
The lady of situations. 50  
Here is the man with three staves, and here the  
Wheel,  
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,  
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,  
Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find  
The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.  
I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.  
Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,  
Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:  
One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City, 60  
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
I had not thought death had undone so many.  
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,  
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.  
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,  
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours  
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.  
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: 'Stetson!  
You who were with me in the ships at Mylae! 70  
That corpse you planted last year in your garden,  
Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?  
Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?  
Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,  
Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!

You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!’

## II. *A Game of Chess*

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Glowed on the marble, where the glass  
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines  
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out 80  
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)  
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra  
Reflecting light upon the table as  
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,  
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;  
In vials of ivory and coloured glass  
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,  
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused  
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air  
That freshened from the window, these ascended 90  
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,  
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,  
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.  
Huge sea-wood fed with copper  
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,  
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.  
Above the antique mantel was displayed  
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene  
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king  
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale 100  
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice  
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,  
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.  
And other withered stumps of time  
Were told upon the walls; staring forms  
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.  
Footsteps shuffled on the stair.  
Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair  
Spread out in fiery points  
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still. 110

'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.  
Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

I never know what you are thinking. Think.’

I think we are in rats’ alley  
Where the dead men lost their bones.

‘What is that noise?’

The wind under the door.

‘What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?’

Nothing again nothing. 120

‘Do

You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember  
Nothing?’

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

‘Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?’

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It’s so elegant

So intelligent 130

‘What shall I do now? What shall I do?

I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?

What shall we ever do?’

The hot water at ten.

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil’s husband got demobbed, I said—

I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself, 140

HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME

Now Albert’s coming back, make yourself a bit smart.

He’ll want to know what you done with that money he gave  
you

To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,

He said, I swear, I can’t bear to look at you.

And no more can’t I, and think of poor Albert,

He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time,

And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said.

Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said. 150  
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a  
straight look.

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.  
Others can pick and choose if you can't.  
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling.  
You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.  
(And her only thirty-one.)

I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,  
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.  
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)  
The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never 160  
been the same.

You *are* a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,  
What you get married for if you don't want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,  
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.

Ta ta. Goonight, Goonight. 170

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good  
night, good night.

### III. *The Fire Sermon*

The river's tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf  
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind  
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.  
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.  
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,  
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends  
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are  
departed.

And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors;      180  
Departed, have left no addresses.

By the waters of Lemn I sat down and wept . . .  
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,  
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.

But at my back in a cold blast I hear  
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation  
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank

While I was fishing in the dull canal  
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse      190

Musing upon the king my brother's wreck  
And on the king my father's death before him.

White bodies naked on the low damp ground  
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,

Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.  
But at my back from time to time I hear

The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring  
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.

O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter  
And on her daughter      200

They wash their feet in soda water

*Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*

Twit twit twit  
Jug jug jug jug jug jug  
So rudely forc'd.  
Tereu

Under the brown fog of a winter noon  
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant  
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants 210  
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,  
Asked me in demotic French  
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel  
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back  
Turn upwards from the desk, when the human engine waits  
Like a taxi throbbing waiting,  
I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,  
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see 220  
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives  
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,  
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights  
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.  
Out of the window perilously spread  
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays.  
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)  
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.  
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs  
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—  
I too awaited the expected guest. 230  
He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,  
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,  
One of the low on whom assurance sits  
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.  
The time is now propitious, as he guesses,  
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,  
Endeavours to engage her in caresses  
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.  
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;  
Exploring hands encounter no defence; 240  
His vanity requires no response,  
And makes a welcome of indifference.  
(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all  
Enacted on this same divan or bed;  
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall  
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)  
Bestows one final patronising kiss,

And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . .

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,  
Hardly aware of her departed lover; 250  
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:  
‘Well now that’s done: and I’m glad it’s over.’  
When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
Paces about her room again, alone,  
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,  
And puts a record on the gramophone.

‘This music crept by me upon the waters’  
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.  
O City city, I can sometimes hear 260  
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,  
The pleasant whining of a mandoline  
And a clatter and a chatter from within  
Where fishermen lounge at noon: where the walls  
Of Magnus Martyr hold  
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

The river sweats  
Oil and tar  
The barges drift  
With the turning tide  
Red sails 270  
Wide  
To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.  
The barges wash  
Drifting logs  
Down Greenwich reach  
Past the Isle of Dogs.  
Weialala leia  
Wallala leialala

Elizabeth and Leicester 280  
Beating oars  
The stern was formed  
A gilded shell  
Red and gold  
The brisk swell

Rippled both shores  
Southwest wind  
Carried down stream  
The peal of bells  
White towers

Weialala leia  
Wallala leialala

290

‘Trams and dusty trees.  
Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew  
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees  
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.’

‘My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart  
Under my feet. After the event  
He wept. He promised “a new start”.  
I made no comment. What should I resent?’

‘On Margate Sands.  
I can connect  
Nothing with nothing  
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.  
My people humble people who expect  
Nothing.’

la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning  
O Lord Thou pluckest me out  
O Lord Thou pluckest

310

burning

#### *IV. Death by Water*

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,  
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the sea swell  
And the profit and loss.

A current under sea  
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell  
He passed the stages of his age and youth  
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew  
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,  
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall  
as you.

## V. *What the Thunder said*

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces  
After the frosty silence in the gardens  
After the agony in stony places  
The shouting and the crying  
Prison and palace and reverberation  
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains  
He who was living is now dead  
We who were living are now dying  
With a little patience 330

Here is no water but only rock  
Rock and no water and the sandy road  
The road winding above among the mountains  
Which are mountains of rock without water  
If there were water we should stop and drink  
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think  
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand  
If there were only water amongst the rock  
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit  
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit 340  
There is not even silence in the mountains  
But dry sterile thunder without rain  
There is not even solitude in the mountains  
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl  
From doors of mudcracked houses  
If there were water and no rock

If there were rock  
And also water  
And water 350  
A spring  
A pool among the rock  
If there were the sound of water only  
Not the cicada  
And dry grass singing  
But sound of water over a rock  
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees  
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop  
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?  
When I count, there are only you and I together 360  
But when I look ahead up the white road  
There is always another one walking beside you  
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded  
I do not know whether a man or a woman  
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air  
Murmur of maternal lamentation  
Who are those hooded hordes swarming  
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth  
Ringed by the flat horizon only 370  
What is the city over the mountains  
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air  
Falling towers  
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria  
Vienna London  
Unreal  
A woman drew her long black hair out tight  
And fiddled whisper music on those strings  
And bats with baby faces in the violet light  
Whistled, and beat their wings 380  
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall  
And upside down in air were towers  
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours  
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted  
wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains  
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing  
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel  
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.  
It has no windows, and the door swings,  
Dry bones can harm no one. 390  
Only a cock stood on the rooftree  
Co co rico co co rico  
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust  
Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves  
Waited for rain, while the black clouds  
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.  
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.  
Then spoke the thunder

DA

400

*Datta*: what have we given?

My friend, blood shaking my heart  
The awful daring of a moment's surrender  
Which an age of prudence can never retract  
By this, and this only, we have existed  
Which is not to be found in our obituaries  
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider  
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor  
In our empty rooms

DA

410

*Dayadhvam*: I have heard the key

Turn in the door once and turn once only  
We think of the key, each in his prison  
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison  
Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours  
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

DA

*Damyata*: The boat responded

Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar  
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded  
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient  
To controlling hands

420

I sat upon the shore

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
Shall I at least set my lands in order?  
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down  
*Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina*  
*Quando fiam uti chelidon*—O swallow swallow  
*Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie*

These fragments I have shored against my ruins  
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

430

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih

## *Notes on the Waste Land*

NOT only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, Miss Weston's book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do; and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean *The Golden Bough*; I have used especially the two volumes *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*. Anyone who is acquainted with these works will immediately recognise in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies.

### I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Line 20. Cf. Ezekiel II, i.

23. Cf. Ecclesiastes XII, v.

31. V. Tristan und Isolde, I, verses 5-8.

42. Id. III, verse 24.

46. I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. The Phoenician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the 'crowds of people', and Death by Water is executed in Part IV. The Man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

60. Cf. Baudelaire:

'Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,  
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.'

63. Cf. Inferno III, 55-57:

'si lunga tratta  
di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto  
che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta.'

64. Cf. *Inferno* IV, 25-27:

‘Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,  
non avea pianto, ma’ che di sospiri,  
che l’aura eterna facevan tremare.’

68. A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

74. Cf. the Dirge in Webster’s *White Devil*.

76. V. Baudelaire, Preface to *Fleurs du Mal*.

## II. GAME OF CHESS

77. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, ii, l. 190.

92. Laquearia. V. *Aeneid*, I, 726:

dependant lychni laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem  
flammis funalia vincunt.

98. Sylvan scene. V. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV, 140.

99. V. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI, Philomela.

100. Cf. Part III, l. 204.

115. Cf. Part III, l. 195.

118. Cf. Webster: ‘Is the wind in that door still?’

126. Cf. Part I, l. 37, 48.

138. Cf. the game of chess in Middleton’s *Women beware Women*.

## III. THE FIRE SERMON

176. V. Spenser, *Prothalamion*.

192. Cf. *The Tempest*, I, ii.

196. Cf. Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress*.

197. Cf. Day, *Parliament of Bees*:

‘When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear,  
A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring  
Actaeon to Diana in the spring,  
Where all shall see her naked skin . . .’

199. I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia.

202. V. Verlaine, *Parsifal*.

210. The currants were quoted at a price ‘carriage and insurance free to London’; and the Bill of Lading, etc., were to be handed to the buyer upon payment of the sight draft.

218. Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character’, is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem. The whole passage from Ovid is of great anthropological interest:

‘ . . . Cum lunone iocos et maior vestra profecto est  
Quam, quae contingit maribus’, dixisse, ‘voluptas’.  
Illa negat; placuit quae sit sententia docti  
Quaerere Tiresiae: venus huic erat utraque nota.  
Nam duo magnorum viridi coeuntia silva  
Corpora serpentum baculi violaverat ictu  
Deque viro factus, mirabile, femina septem  
Egerat autumnos; octavo rursus eosdem  
Vidit et ‘est vestrae si tanta potentia plagae’,  
Dixit ‘ut auctoris sortem in contraria mutet,  
Nunc quoque vos feriam!’ percussis anguibus isdem  
Forma prior rediit genetivaeque venit imago.  
Arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa  
Dicta lovis firmat; gravius Saturnia iusto  
Nec pro materia fertur doluisse suique  
Iudicis aeterna damnavit lumina nocte,  
At pater omnipotens (neque enim licet inrita cuiquam  
Facta dei fecisse deo) pro lumine adempto  
Scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore.

221. This may not appear as exact as Sappho’s lines, but I had in mind the ‘longshore’ or ‘dory’ fisherman, who returns at nightfall.

253. V. Goldsmith, the song in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

257. V. *The Tempest*, as above.

264. The interior of St Magnus Martyr is to my mind one of the finest among Wren’s interiors. See *The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches*: (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.).

266. The Song of the (three) Thames-daughters begins here. From line 292 to 306 inclusive they speak in turn. V. *Götterdämmerung*, III, i: the Rhine-daughters.

279. V. Froude, *Elizabeth*, Vol. I, ch. iv, letter of De Quadra to Philip of Spain:

‘In the afternoon we were in a barge, watching the games on the river. (The queen) was alone with Lord Robert and myself on the poop, when they began to talk nonsense, and went so far that Lord Robert at last said, as I was on the spot there was no reason why they should not be married if the queen pleased.’

293. Cf. *Purgatorio*, V, 133:

‘Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;  
Siena mi fe’, disfecemi Maremma.’

307. V. St Augustine’s *Confessions*: ‘to Carthage then I came, where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears’.

308. The complete text of the Buddha’s Fire Sermon (which corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount) from which these words are taken, will be found translated in the late Henry Clarke Warren’s *Buddhism in Translation* (Harvard Oriental Series). Mr. Warren was one of the great pioneers of Buddhist studies in the Occident.

309. From St Augustine’s *Confessions* again. The collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident.

## V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

In the first part of Part V three themes are employed: the journey to Emmaus, the approach to the Chapel Perilous (see Miss Weston’s book) and the present decay of eastern Europe.

357. This is *Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii*, the hermit-thrush which I have heard in Quebec County. Chapman says (*Handbook of birds of Eastern North America*) ‘it is most at home in secluded woodland and thickety retreats. . . . Its notes are not remarkable for variety or volume, but in purity and sweetness of tone and exquisite modulation they are unequalled’. Its ‘water-dripping song’ is justly celebrated.

360. The following lines were stimulated by the account of one of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton’s): it

was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was *one more member* than could actually be counted.

366-76. Cf. Hermann Hesse, *Blick ins Chaos*: ‘Schon ist halb Europa, schon ist zumindest der halbe Osten Europas auf dem Wege zum Chaos, fährt betrunken im heiligen Wahn am Abgrund entlang und singt dazu, singt betrunken und hymnisch wie Dmitri Karamasoff sang. Ueber diese Lieder lacht der Bürger beleidigt, der Heilige und Seher hört sie mit Tränen’.

401. ‘Datta, dayadhvam, damyata’ (Give, sympathise, control). The fable of the meaning of the Thunder is found in the *Brihadaranyaka—Upanishad*, 5, 1. A translation is found in Deussen’s *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda*, p. 489.

407. Cf. Webster, *The White Devil*, V, vi:

‘ . . . they’ll remarry  
Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider  
Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs.’

411. Cf. *Inferno*, XXXIII, 46:

‘ed io sentii chiavar l’uscio di sotto  
all’orribile torre.’

Also F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 346.

‘My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it . . . In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.’

424. V. Weston: *From Ritual to Romance*; chapter on the Fisher King.

427. V. *Purgatorio*, XXVI, 148.

‘ “Ara vos prec per aquella valor  
que vos guida al som de l’escalina,  
sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor.”  
Poi s’ascose nel foco che gli affina.’

428. V. *Pervigilium Veneris*. Cf. Philomela in Parts II and III.

429. V. Gerard de Nerval, Sonnet *El Desdichado*.

431. V. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*.

433. Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The Peace which passeth understanding' is our equivalent to this word.

**THE HOLLOW MEN**  
**1925**

*Mistah Kurtz—he dead*

# *The Hollow Men*

*A penny for the Old Guy*

## I

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us—if at all—not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men.

## II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
In death's dream kingdom  
These do not appear:  
There, the eyes are  
Sunlight on a broken column  
There, is a tree swinging  
And voices are  
In the wind's singing  
More distant and more solemn

Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer—

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

### III

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.

### IV

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose  
Of death's twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men.

V

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow

*Life is very long*

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent

Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

For Thine is  
Life is  
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

**ASH-WEDNESDAY**  
**1930**

# I

Because I do not hope to turn again  
Because I do not hope  
Because I do not hope to turn  
Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope  
I no longer strive to strive towards such things  
(Why should the aged eagle stretch its wings?)  
Why should I mourn  
The vanished power of the usual reign?

Because I do not hope to know again  
The infirm glory of the positive hour  
Because I do not think  
Because I know I shall not know  
The one veritable transitory power  
Because I cannot drink  
There, where trees flower, and springs flow, for there is  
nothing again

Because I know that time is always time  
And place is always and only place  
And what is actual is actual only for one time  
And only for one place  
I rejoice that things are as they are and  
I renounce the blessed face  
And renounce the voice  
Because I cannot hope to turn again  
Consequently I rejoice, having to construct something  
Upon which to rejoice

And pray to God to have mercy upon us  
And I pray that I may forget  
These matters that with myself I too much discuss  
Too much explain  
Because I do not hope to turn again  
Let these words answer  
For what is done, not to be done again  
May the judgement not be too heavy upon us

Because these wings are no longer wings to fly  
But merely vane to beat the air  
The air which is now thoroughly small and dry  
Smaller and dryer than the will  
Teach us to care and not to care  
Teach us to sit still.

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death  
Pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

## II

Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree  
In the cool of the day, having fed to satiety  
On my legs my heart my liver and that which had been  
    contained

In the hollow round of my skull. And God said  
Shall these bones live? shall these  
Bones live? And that which had been contained  
In the bones (which were already dry) said chirping:  
Because of the goodness of this Lady  
And because of her loveliness, and because  
She honours the Virgin in meditation,  
We shine with brightness. And I who am here dissembled  
Proffer my deeds to oblivion, and my love  
To the posterity of the desert and the fruit of the gourd.  
It is this which recovers  
My guts the strings of my eyes and the indigestible portions  
Which the leopards reject. The Lady is withdrawn  
In a white gown, to contemplation, in a white gown.  
Let the whiteness of bones atone to forgetfulness.  
There is no life in them. As I am forgotten  
And would be forgotten, so I would forget  
Thus devoted, concentrated in purpose. And God said  
Prophecy to the wind, to the wind only for only  
The wind will listen. And the bones sang chirping  
With the burden of the grasshopper, saying

Lady of silences  
Calm and distressed  
Torn and most whole  
Rose of memory  
Rose of forgetfulness  
Exhausted and life-giving  
Worried reposeful  
The single Rose

Is now the Garden  
Where all loves end  
Terminate torment  
Of love unsatisfied  
The greater torment  
Of love satisfied  
End of the endless  
Journey to no end  
Conclusion of all that  
Is inconclusible  
Speech without word and  
Word of no speech  
Grace to the Mother  
For the Garden  
Where all love ends.

Under a juniper-tree the bones sang, scattered and shining  
We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other,  
Under a tree in the cool of the day, with the blessing of sand,  
Forgetting themselves and each other, united  
In the quiet of the desert. This is the land which ye  
Shall divide by lot. And neither division nor unity  
Matters. This is the land. We have our inheritance.

### III

At the first turning of the second stair  
I turned and saw below  
The same shape twisted on the banister  
Under the vapour in the fetid air  
Struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears  
The deceitful face of hope and of despair.

At the second turning of the second stair  
I left them twisting, turning below;  
There were no more faces and the stair was dark,  
Damp, jagged, like an old man's mouth drivelling, beyond  
    repair,  
Or the toothed gullet of an aged shark.

At the first turning of the third stair  
Was a slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit  
And beyond the hawthorn blossom and a pasture scene  
The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green  
Enchanted the maytime with an antique flute.  
Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,  
Lilac and brown hair;  
Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the mind  
    over the third stair,  
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair  
Climbing the third stair.

Lord, I am not worthy  
Lord, I am not worthy

but speak the word only.



Who walked between the violet and the violet  
Who walked between  
The various ranks of varied green  
Going in white and blue, in Mary's colour,  
Talking of trivial things  
In ignorance and in knowledge of eternal colour  
Who moved among the others as they walked,  
Who then made strong the fountains and made fresh the  
springs

Made cool the dry rock and made firm the sand  
In blue of larkspur, blue of Mary's colour,  
Sovegna vos

Here are the years that walk between, bearing  
Away the fiddles and the flutes, restoring  
One who moves in the time between sleep and waking,  
wearing

White light folded, sheathed about her, folded.  
The new years walk, restoring  
Through a bright cloud of tears, the years, restoring  
With a new verse the ancient rhyme. Redeem  
The time. Redeem  
The unread vision in the higher dream  
While jewelled unicorns draw by the gilded hearse.

The silent sister veiled in white and blue  
Between the yews, behind the garden god,  
Whose flute is breathless, bent her head and signed but spoke  
no word

But the fountain sprang up and the bird sang down  
Redeem the time, redeem the dream  
The token of the word unheard, unspoken

Till the wind shake a thousand whispers from the yew

And after this our exile

## V

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent  
If the unheard, unspoken  
Word is unspoken, unheard;  
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,  
The Word without a word, the Word within  
The world and for the world;  
And the light shone in darkness and  
Against the World the unstilled world still whirled  
About the centre of the silent Word.

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Where shall the word be found, where will the word  
Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence  
Not on the sea or on the islands, not  
On the mainland, in the desert or the rain land,  
For those who walk in darkness  
Both in the day time and in the night time  
The right time and the right place are not here  
No place of grace for those who avoid the face  
No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny  
the voice

Will the veiled sister pray for  
Those who walk in darkness, who chose thee and oppose  
thee,  
Those who are torn on the horn between season and season,  
time and time, between  
Hour and hour, word and word, power and power, those who  
wait  
In darkness? Will the veiled sister pray  
For children at the gate  
Who will not go away and cannot pray:  
Pray for those who chose and oppose

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Will the veiled sister between the slender  
Yew trees pray for those who offend her  
And are terrified and cannot surrender  
And affirm before the world and deny between the rocks  
In the last desert between the last blue rocks  
The desert in the garden the garden in the desert  
Of drouth, spitting from the mouth the withered apple-seed.

O my people.



Although I do not hope to turn again  
Although I do not hope  
Although I do not hope to turn

Wavering between the profit and the loss  
In this brief transit where the dreams cross  
The dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying  
(Bless me father) though I do not wish to wish these things  
From the wide window towards the granite shore  
The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying  
Unbroken wings

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices  
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices  
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel  
For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell  
Quickens to recover  
The cry of quail and the whirling plover  
And the blind eye creates  
The empty forms between the ivory gates  
And smell renews the salt savour of the sandy earth

This is the time of tension between dying and birth  
The place of solitude where three dreams cross  
Between blue rocks  
But when the voices shaken from the yew-tree drift away  
Let the other yew be shaken and reply.  
Blessèd sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of the  
garden,  
Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood  
Teach us to care and not to care  
Teach us to sit still  
Even among these rocks,  
Our peace in His will  
And even among these rocks  
Sister, mother  
And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,  
Suffer me not to be separated

And let my cry come unto Thee.

# **ARIEL POEMS**

## *Journey of the Magi*

'A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a journey, and such a long journey:  
The ways deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.'  
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,  
Lying down in the melting snow.  
There were times we regretted  
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,  
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.  
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,  
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to travel all night,  
Sleeping in snatches,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,  
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;  
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,  
And three trees on the low sky,  
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.  
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,  
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,  
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.  
But there was no information, and so we continued  
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon  
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
This set down  
This: were we led all that way for

Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.

## *A Song for Simeon*

Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and  
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills;  
The stubborn season has made stand.  
My life is light, waiting for the death wind,  
Like a feather on the back of my hand.  
Dust in sunlight and memory in corners  
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.

Grant us thy peace.  
I have walked many years in this city,  
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,  
Have given and taken honour and ease.  
There went never any rejected from my door.  
Who shall remember my house, where shall live my  
    children's children  
When the time of sorrow is come?  
They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,  
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.

Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation  
Grant us thy peace.  
Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,  
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,  
Now at this birth season of decease,  
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,  
Grant Israel's consolation  
To one who has eighty years and no tomorrow.

According to thy word.  
They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation  
With glory and derision,  
Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.  
Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,  
Not for me the ultimate vision.  
Grant me thy peace.  
(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,  
Thine also.)

I am tired with my own life and the lives of those after me,  
I am dying in my own death and the deaths of those after me.  
Let thy servant depart,  
Having seen thy salvation.

# *Animula*

‘Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul’  
To a flat world of changing lights and noise,  
To light, dark, dry or damp, chilly or warm;  
Moving between the legs of tables and of chairs,  
Rising or falling, grasping at kisses and toys,  
Advancing boldly, sudden to take alarm,  
Retreating to the corner of arm and knee,  
Eager to be reassured, taking pleasure  
In the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas tree,  
Pleasure in the wind, the sunlight and the sea;  
Studies the sunlit pattern on the floor  
And running stags around a silver tray;  
Confounds the actual and the fanciful,  
Content with playing-cards and kings and queens,  
What the fairies do and what the servants say.  
The heavy burden of the growing soul  
Perplexes and offends more, day by day;  
Week by week, offends and perplexes more  
With the imperatives of ‘is and seems’  
And may and may not, desire and control.  
The pain of living and the drug of dreams  
Curl up the small soul in the window seat  
Behind the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.  
Issues from the hand of time the simple soul  
Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame,  
Unable to fare forward or retreat,  
Fearing the warm reality, the offered good,  
Denying the importunity of the blood,  
Shadow of its own shadows, spectre in its own gloom,  
Leaving disordered papers in a dusty room;  
Living first in the silence after the viaticum.

Pray for Guiterriez, avid of speed and power,  
For Boudin, blown to pieces,  
For this one who made a great fortune,  
And that one who went his own way.  
Pray for Floret, by the boarhound slain between the yew  
trees,  
Pray for us now and at the hour of our birth.

## *Marina*

*Quis hic locus, quae  
regio, quae mundi plaga?*

What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands  
What water lapping the bow  
And scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the  
fog  
What images return  
O my daughter.

Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog, meaning  
Death  
Those who glitter with the glory of the hummingbird,  
meaning  
Death  
Those who sit in the stye of contentment, meaning  
Death  
Those who suffer the ecstasy of the animals, meaning  
Death

Are become unsubstantial, reduced by a wind,  
A breath of pine, and the woodsong fog  
By this grace dissolved in place

What is this face, less clear and clearer  
The pulse in the arm, less strong and stronger—  
Given or lent? more distant than stars and nearer than the eye

Whispers and small laughter between leaves and hurrying  
feet  
Under sleep, where all the waters meet.  
Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint cracked with heat.  
I made this, I have forgotten  
And remember.  
The rigging weak and the canvas rotten  
Between one June and another September.  
Made this unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own.

The garboard strake leaks, the seams need caulking.  
This form, this face, this life  
Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me  
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,  
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships.

What seas what shores what granite islands towards my  
timbers  
And woodthrush calling through the fog  
My daughter.

**CHORUSES**  
**FROM 'THE ROCK'**

# I

The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,  
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit.  
O perpetual revolution of configured stars,  
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,  
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!  
The endless cycle of idea and action,  
Endless invention, endless experiment,  
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;  
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;  
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.  
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,  
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,  
But nearness to death no nearer to GOD.  
Where is the Life we have lost in living?  
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?  
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries  
Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to the Dust.

I journeyed to London, to the timekept City,  
Where the River flows, with foreign flotations.  
There I was told: we have too many churches,  
And too few chop-houses. There I was told:  
Let the vicars retire. Men do not need the Church  
In the place where they work, but where they spend their  
Sundays.  
In the City, we need no bells:  
Let them waken the suburbs.  
I journeyed to the suburbs, and there I was told:  
We toil for six days, on the seventh we must motor  
To Hindhead, or Maidenhead.  
If the weather is foul we stay at home and read the papers.  
In industrial districts, there I was told  
Of economic laws.  
In the pleasant countryside, there it seemed  
That the country now is only fit for picnics.  
And the Church does not seem to be wanted

In country or in suburb; and in the town  
Only for important weddings.

CHORUS LEADER:

Silence! and preserve respectful distance.  
For I perceive approaching  
The Rock. Who will perhaps answer our doubtings.  
The Rock. The Watcher. The Stranger.  
He who has seen what has happened  
And who sees what is to happen.  
The Witness. The Critic. The Stranger.  
The God-shaken, in whom is the truth inborn.

*Enter the ROCK, led by a BOY:*

THE ROCK:

The lot of man is ceaseless labour,  
Or ceaseless idleness, which is still harder,  
Or irregular labour, which is not pleasant.  
I have trodden the winepress alone, and I know  
That it is hard to be really useful, resigning  
The things that men count for happiness, seeking  
The good deeds that lead to obscurity, accepting  
With equal face those that bring ignominy,  
The applause of all or the love of none.  
All men are ready to invest their money  
But most expect dividends.  
I say to you: *Make perfect your will.*  
I say: take no thought of the harvest,  
But only of proper sowing.

The world turns and the world changes,  
But one thing does not change.  
In all of my years, one thing does not change.  
However you disguise it, this thing does not change:  
The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil.  
Forgetful, you neglect your shrines and churches;  
The men you are in these times deride  
What has been done of good, you find explanations  
To satisfy the rational and enlightened mind.  
Second, you neglect and belittle the desert.  
The desert is not remote in southern tropics,

The desert is not only around the corner,  
The desert is squeezed in the tube-train next to you,  
The desert is in the heart of your brother.  
The good man is the builder, if he build what is good.  
I will show you the things that are now being done,  
And some of the things that were long ago done,  
That you may take heart. Make perfect your will.  
Let me show you the work of the humble. Listen.

*The lights fade; in the semi-darkness the voices of WORKMEN  
are heard chanting.*

*In the vacant places  
We will build with new bricks  
There are hands and machines  
And clay for new brick  
And lime for new mortar  
Where the bricks are fallen  
We will build with new stone  
Where the beams are rotten  
We will build with new timbers  
Where the word is unspoken  
We will build with new speech  
There is work together  
A Church for all  
And a job for each  
Every man to his work.*

*Now a group of WORKMEN is silhouetted against the dim sky.  
From farther away, they are answered by voices of the*

*UNEMPLOYED.*

*No man has hired us  
With pocketed hands  
And lowered faces  
We stand about in open places  
And shiver in unlit rooms.  
Only the wind moves  
Over empty fields, untilled  
Where the plough rests, at an angle  
To the furrow. In this land  
There shall be one cigarette to two men,  
To two women one half pint of bitter*

*Ale. In this land  
No man has hired us.  
Our life is unwelcome, our death  
Unmentioned in 'The Times'.*

*Chant of WORKMEN again.*

*The river flows, the seasons turn,  
The sparrow and starling have no time to waste.  
If men do not build  
How shall they live?  
When the field is tilled  
And the wheat is bread  
They shall not die in a shortened bed  
And a narrow sheet. In this street  
There is no beginning, no movement, no peace and no end  
But noise without speech, food without taste.  
Without delay, without haste.  
We would build the beginning and the end of this street.  
We build the meaning:  
A Church for all  
And a job for each  
Each man to his work.*

## II

Thus your fathers were made  
Fellow citizens of the saints, of the household of GOD, being  
built upon the foundation  
Of apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself the chief  
cornerstone,  
But you, have you built well, that you now sit helpless in a  
ruined house?  
Where many are born to idleness, to frittered lives and  
squalid deaths, embittered scorn in honeyless hives,  
And those who would build and restore turn out the palms of  
their hands, or look in vain towards foreign lands for  
alms to be more or the urn to be filled.  
Your building not fitly framed together, you sit ashamed and  
wonder whether and how you may be builded  
together for a habitation of GOD in the Spirit, the  
Spirit which moved on the face of the waters like a  
lantern set on the back of a tortoise.  
And some say: 'How can we love our neighbour? For love  
must be made real in act, as desire unites with  
desired; we have only our labour to give and our  
labour is not required.  
We wait on corners, with nothing to bring but the songs we  
can sing which nobody wants to hear sung;  
Waiting to be flung in the end, on a heap less useful than  
dung.'

You, have you built well, have you forgotten the  
cornerstone?  
Talking of right relations of men, but not of relations of men  
to GOD.  
'Our citizenship is in Heaven'; yes, but that is the model and  
type for your citizenship upon earth.

When your fathers fixed the place of GOD,  
And settled all the inconvenient saints,  
Apostles, martyrs, in a kind of Whipsnade,  
Then they could set about imperial expansion

Accompanied by industrial development.  
Exporting iron, coal and cotton goods  
And intellectual enlightenment  
And everything, including capital  
And several versions of the Word of GOD:  
The British race assured of a mission  
Performed it, but left much at home unsure.

Of all that was done in the past, you eat the fruit, either  
rotten or ripe.  
And the Church must be forever building, and always  
decaying, and always being restored.  
For every ill deed in the past we suffer the consequence:  
For sloth, for avarice, gluttony, neglect of the Word of GOD,  
For pride, for lechery, treachery, for every act of sin.  
And of all that was done that was good, you have the  
inheritance.  
For good and ill deeds belong to a man alone, when he stands  
alone on the other side of death,  
But here upon earth you have the reward of the good and ill  
that was done by those who have gone before you.  
And all that is ill you may repair if you walk together in  
humble repentance, expiating the sins of your fathers;  
And all that was good you must fight to keep with hearts as  
devoted as those of your fathers who fought to gain it.  
The Church must be forever building, for it is forever  
decaying within and attacked from without;  
For this is the law of life; and you must remember that while  
there is time of prosperity  
The people will neglect the Temple, and in time of adversity  
they will decry it.

What life have you if you have not life together?  
There is no life that is not in community,  
And no community not lived in praise of GOD.  
Even the anchorite who meditates alone,  
For whom the days and nights repeat the praise of GOD,  
Prays for the Church, the Body of Christ incarnate.  
And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads,  
And no man knows or cares who is his neighbour  
Unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance,

But all dash to and fro in motor cars,  
Familiar with the roads and settled nowhere.  
Nor does the family even move about together,  
But every son would have his motor cycle,  
And daughters ride away on casual pillions.

Much to cast down, much to build, much to restore;  
Let the work not delay, time and the arm not waste;  
Let the clay be dug from the pit, let the saw cut the stone,  
Let the fire not be quenched in the forge.

### III

The Word of the LORD came unto me, saying:  
O miserable cities of designing men,  
O wretched generation of enlightened men,  
Betrayed in the mazes of your ingenuities,  
Sold by the proceeds of your proper inventions:  
I have given you hands which you turn from worship,  
I have given you speech, for endless palaver,  
I have given you my Law, and you set up commissions,  
I have given you lips, to express friendly sentiments,  
I have given you hearts, for reciprocal distrust.  
I have given you power of choice, and you only alternate  
Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.  
Many are engaged in writing books and printing them,  
Many desire to see their names in print,  
Many read nothing but the race reports.  
Much is your reading, but not the Word of GOD,  
Much is your building, but not the House of GOD.  
Will you build me a house of plaster, with corrugated  
roofing,  
To be filled with a litter of Sunday newspapers?

1ST MALE VOICE:

A Cry from the East:  
What shall be done to the shore of smoky ships?  
Will you leave my people forgetful and forgotten  
To idleness, labour, and delirious stupor?  
There shall be left the broken chimney,  
The peeled hull, a pile of rusty iron,  
In a street of scattered brick where the goat climbs,  
Where My Word is unspoken.

2ND MALE VOICE:

A Cry from the North, from the West and from the South  
Whence thousands travel daily to the timekept City;  
Where My Word is unspoken,  
In the land of lobelias and tennis flannels  
The rabbit shall burrow and the thorn revisit,

The nettle shall flourish on the gravel court,  
And the wind shall say: 'Here were decent godless people:  
Their only monument the asphalt road  
And a thousand lost golf balls'.

CHORUS:

We build in vain unless the LORD build with us.  
Can you keep the City that the LORD keeps not with you?  
A thousand policemen directing the traffic  
Cannot tell you why you come or where you go.  
A colony of cavies or a horde of active marmots  
Build better than they that build without the LORD.  
Shall we lift up our feet among perpetual ruins?  
I have loved the beauty of Thy House, the peace of Thy  
sanctuary,  
I have swept the floors and garnished the altars.  
Where there is no temple there shall be no homes,  
Though you have shelters and institutions,  
Precarious lodgings while the rent is paid,  
Subsiding basements where the rat breeds  
Or sanitary dwellings with numbered doors  
Or a house a little better than your neighbour's;  
When the Stranger says: 'What is the meaning of this city?  
Do you huddle close together because you love each  
other?'  
What will you answer? 'We all dwell together  
To make money from each other'? or 'This is a  
community'?  
And the Stranger will depart and return to the desert.  
O my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger,  
Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions.

O weariness of men who turn from GOD  
To the grandeur of your mind and the glory of your action,  
To arts and inventions and daring enterprises,  
To schemes of human greatness thoroughly discredited,  
Binding the earth and the water to your service,  
Exploiting the seas and developing the mountains,  
Dividing the stars into common and preferred,  
Engaged in devising the perfect refrigerator,  
Engaged in working out a rational morality,  
Engaged in printing as many books as possible

Engaged in printing as many books as possible,  
Plotting of happiness and flinging empty bottles,  
Turning from your vacancy to fevered enthusiasm  
For nation or race or what you call humanity;  
Though you forget the way to the Temple,  
There is one who remembers the way to your door:  
Life you may evade, but Death you shall not.  
You shall not deny the Stranger.

## VII

In the beginning GOD created the world. Waste and void.

Waste and void. And darkness was upon the face of  
the deep.

And when there were men, in their various ways, they  
struggled in torment towards GOD

Blindly and vainly, for man is a vain thing, and man  
without GOD is a seed upon the wind: driven this way  
and that, and finding no place of lodgement and  
germination.

They followed the light and the shadow, and the light led  
them forward to light and the shadow led them to  
darkness,

Worshipping snakes or trees, worshipping devils rather  
than nothing: crying for life beyond life, for ecstasy  
not of the flesh.

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face  
of the deep.

And the Spirit moved upon the face of the water.

And men who turned towards the light and were known of  
the light

Invented the Higher Religions; and the Higher Religions  
were good

And led men from light to light, to knowledge of Good and  
Evil.

But their light was ever surrounded and shot with darkness  
As the air of temperate seas is pierced by the still dead  
breath of the Arctic Current;

And they came to an end, a dead end stirred with a flicker  
of life,

And they came to the withered ancient look of a child that  
has died of starvation.

Prayer wheels, worship of the dead, denial of this world,  
affirmation of rites with forgotten meanings

In the restless wind-whopped sand, or the hills where the  
wind will not let the snow rest.

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face

of the deep.

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in  
time and of time,  
A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call  
history: transecting, bisecting the world of time, a  
moment in time but not like a moment of time,  
A moment in time but time was made through that  
moment: for without the meaning there is no time,  
and that moment of time gave the meaning.  
Then it seemed as if men must proceed from light to light,  
in the light of the Word,  
Through the Passion and Sacrifice saved in spite of their  
negative being;  
Bestial as always before, carnal, self-seeking as always  
before, selfish and purblind as ever before.  
Yet always struggling, always reaffirming, always  
resuming their march on the way that was lit by the  
light;  
Often halting, loitering, straying, delaying, returning, yet  
following no other way.

But it seems that something has happened that has never  
happened before: though we know not just when, or  
why, or how, or where.  
Men have left GOD not for other gods, they say, but for no  
god; and this has never happened before  
That men both deny gods and worship gods, professing  
first Reason,  
And then Money, and Power, and what they call Life, or  
Race, or Dialectic.  
The Church disowned, the tower overthrown, the bells  
upturned, what have we to do  
But stand with empty hands and palms turned upwards  
In an age which advances progressively backwards?

VOICE OF THE UNEMPLOYED (*afar off*):

*In this land*

*There shall be one cigarette to two men,  
To two women one half pint of bitter  
Ale . . .*

CHORUS:

What does the world say, does the whole world stray in  
high-powered cars on a by-pass way?

VOICE OF THE UNEMPLOYED (*more faintly*):

*In this land*

*No man has hired us . . .*

CHORUS:

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face  
of the deep.

Has the Church failed mankind, or has mankind failed the  
Church?

When the Church is no longer regarded, not even opposed,  
and men have forgotten

All gods except Usury, Lust and Power.

## IX

Son of Man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears  
And set thine heart upon all that I show thee.

Who is this that has said: the House of GOD is a House of  
Sorrow;

We must walk in black and go sadly, with longdrawn faces,  
We must go between empty walls, quavering lowly,  
whispering faintly,

Among a few flickering scattered lights?

They would put upon GOD their own sorrow, the grief they  
should feel

For their sins and faults as they go about their daily  
occasions.

Yet they walk in the street proudnecked, like thoroughbreds  
ready for races,

Adorning themselves, and busy in the market, the forum,  
And all other secular meetings.

Thinking good of themselves, ready for any festivity,  
Doing themselves very well.

Let us mourn in a private chamber, learning the way of  
penitence,

And then let us learn the joyful communion of saints.

The soul of Man must quicken to creation.

Out of the formless stone, when the artist united himself with  
stone,

Spring always new forms of life, from the soul of man that is  
joined to the soul of stone;

Out of the meaningless practical shapes of all that is living or  
lifeless

Joined with the artist's eye, new life, new form, new colour.

Out of the sea of sound the life of music,

Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of  
verbal imprecisions,

Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken  
the place of thoughts and feelings,

There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of  
incantation.

LORD, shall we not bring these gifts to Your service?  
Shall we not bring to Your service all our powers  
For life, for dignity, grace and order,  
And intellectual pleasures of the senses?  
The LORD who created must wish us to create  
And employ our creation again in His service  
Which is already His service in creating.  
For Man is joined spirit and body,  
And therefore must serve as spirit and body.  
Visible and invisible, two worlds meet in Man;  
Visible and invisible must meet in His Temple;  
You must not deny the body.

Now you shall see the Temple completed:  
After much striving, after many obstacles;  
For the work of creation is never without travail;  
The formed stone, the visible crucifix,  
The dressed altar, the lifting light,

Light

Light

The visible reminder of Invisible Light.

## X

You have seen the house built, you have seen it adorned  
By one who came in the night, it is now dedicated to GOD.  
It is now a visible church, one more light set on a hill  
In a world confused and dark and disturbed by portents of  
fear.

And what shall we say of the future? Is one church all we can  
build?

Or shall the Visible Church go on to conquer the World?

The great snake lies ever half awake, at the bottom of the  
pit of the world, curled  
In folds of himself until he awakens in hunger and moving  
his head to right and to left prepares for his hour to  
devour.

But the Mystery of Iniquity is a pit too deep for mortal eyes  
to plumb. Come

Ye out from among those who prize the serpent's golden  
eyes,

The worshippers, self-given sacrifice of the snake. Take  
Your way and be ye separate.

Be not too curious of Good and Evil;

Seek not to count the future waves of Time;

But be ye satisfied that you have light

Enough to take your step and find your foothold.

O Light Invisible, we praise Thee!

Too bright for mortal vision.

O Greater Light, we praise Thee for the less;

The eastern light our spires touch at morning,

The light that slants upon our western doors at evening,

The twilight over stagnant pools at batflight,

Moon light and star light, owl and moth light,

Glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade.

O Light Invisible, we worship Thee!

We thank Thee for the lights that we have kindled,  
The light of altar and of sanctuary;

Small lights of those who meditate at midnight  
And lights directed through the coloured panes of windows  
And light reflected from the polished stone,  
The gilded carven wood, the coloured fresco.  
Our gaze is submarine, our eyes look upward  
And see the light that fractures through unquiet water.  
We see the light but see not whence it comes.  
O Light Invisible, we glorify Thee!

In our rhythm of earthly life we tire of light. We are glad  
when the day ends, when the play ends; and ecstasy is  
too much pain.  
We are children quickly tired: children who are up in the  
night and fall asleep as the rocket is fired; and the day  
is long for work or play.  
We tire of distraction or concentration, we sleep and are glad  
to sleep,  
Controlled by the rhythm of blood and the day and the night  
and the seasons.  
And we must extinguish the candle, put out the light and  
relight it;  
Forever must quench, forever relight the flame.  
Therefore we thank Thee for our little light, that is dappled  
with shadow.  
We thank Thee who hast moved us to building, to finding, to  
forming at the ends of our fingers and beams of our  
eyes.  
And when we have built an altar to the Invisible Light, we  
may set thereon the little lights for which our bodily  
vision is made.  
And we thank Thee that darkness reminds us of light.  
O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

Readers who are familiar only with the 'traditional' poets must revise their attitude to poetry if they are to get on terms with T. S. Eliot, the major poet of this modern age. They may be shaken, for example, by his manner of interpolating sardonic or colloquial passages into a 'serious' poem—

‘I grow old . . . I grow old  
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.’

And they may feel that by calling a poem, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', Mr. Eliot is being derisive or satirical. It is quite certain that such readers will need time and patience to discover the clues of his unconventional conception of poetic aim and method. Some of the poems in this collection, now presented for the first time in a popular edition, reveal these clues more quickly than others: 'Journey of the Magi', for instance, or 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night', and once the reader becomes familiar with Mr. Eliot's 'poetic shorthand' he will the more easily follow such major poems as 'The Waste Land'. There are no poetic 'subjects' in this book, no conventional nightingales and daffodils, and there is no acceptance, either, of the traditional rules of metre and rhyme. As one discerning critic has said: 'We have here, in short, poetry that expresses freely a modern sensibility, the ways of feeling and the modes of experience of one fully alive in his own age'.

The main poem in this collection is 'The Waste Land' (1922) to which Mr. Eliot has himself supplied some revealing footnotes which help the reader to cope with the associations and allusions in which the poem is so rich. His theme here, as in most of his other poems, is disillusion with our contemporary civilization, which he contrasts in several of its aspects with the beliefs and practices of other and earlier races. It is a difficult poem to follow and even Mr Eliot's own sign-posts are sometimes cryptic. But of 'The Waste Land', as of all the other poems in this book, it can be said that they incite the reader to pursue their meaning. The process is not a rapid one, and many people will 'feel' the poems long before they understand them. Mr. Eliot himself has said: 'Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood', and in the rhythms, images and epithets of these poems there is an unmistakable and incandescent power of communication.

## T. S. ELIOT

Thomas Stearns Eliot, O.M., poet and critic, was born of New England stock in St Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., in September, 1888, and was educated at Harvard, after which he spent a year at the Sorbonne, Paris, and a year at Merton College, Oxford. He settled in England in 1915. After eight years in Lloyds Bank in the City of London—during which period he began his editorship of *The Criterion*, a literary quarterly—he joined the firm of publishers which later became Faber and Faber. His first volume of verse, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, was published in London in 1917. His first critical essays and reviews were collected in 1920 in a volume entitled *The Sacred Wood*. *The Waste Land*, his most influential poem, followed in 1922. A collected edition of his essays was published in 1932, and a collected edition of his poems in 1936. Another volume of verse, *Four Quartets*, was published in 1944. He has also written three plays in verse, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), *The Family Reunion* (1939), and *The Cocktail Party* (1950). His verse and prose have been translated into many foreign languages (see *Bibliography* by D. Gallup, Yale, 1947), and his influence on contemporary English literature has been widespread and profound. His literary honours include: The Clark Lectureship, Cambridge University, 1926; The Charles Eliot Norton Visiting Professorship, Harvard University, 1932-33, Presidency of the Classical Association in 1943 and of the Virgil Society in 1944; honorary fellowships of Merton College, Oxford, and Magdalene College, Cambridge; and honorary doctorates of twelve English, European and American Universities. In 1948 he was awarded the O.M., and in the same year the Nobel Prize for Literature.

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *Selected Poems* by T. S. Eliot]