The Waste Land and Other Poems

by T. S. Eliot

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Colophon

Poetry is compiled from poems published from 1904–1930 by T. S. Eliot.

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Endnotes

“A.B.C.’s” signifes endemic teashops, found in all parts of London. The initials signify “Aerated Bread Company, Limited.”

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 (Macmillan, 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.

Cf. Ezekiel 2:1.

Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:5.

V. Tristan und Isolde, I, verses 5–8.

V. Tristan und Isolde, III, verse 24.

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.

Cf. Baudelaire:

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

Cf. Inferno, II 55–7.

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

Cf. Inferno, IV 25–7:

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

A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

Cf. the Dirge in Webster’s White Devil.

V. Baudelaire, Preface to Fleurs du Mal.

Cf. Antony and Cleopatra, act II scene II, l. 190.

Laquearia. V. Aeneid, I 726:

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

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

V. Ovid, Metamorphoses, VI, Philomela.

Cf. Part III, l. 204.

Cf. Part III, l. 195.

Cf. Webster: “Is the wind in that door still?”

Cf. Part I, l. 37, 48.

Cf. the game of chess in Middleton’s Women Beware Women.

V. Spenser, Prothalamion.

Cf. The Tempest, act I scene II.

Cf. Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress.”

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 …”

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

V. Verlaine, Parsifal.

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.

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 Iunone 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 genetivaque venit imago. Arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa Dicta Iovis 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.”

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

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

V. The Tempest, act I scene II.

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.).

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

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."

Cf. Purgatorio, V 133:

"Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia; Siena mi fe', disfecemi Maremma."

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Through line 376. 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 heiligem 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."

"Datta, dayadhvam, damyata" (Give, sympathize, 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.

Cf. Webster, The White Devil, act V scene VI:

"… they'll remarry Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider Make a

thin curtain for your epitaphs.”

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.”

V. Weston, From Ritual to Romance; chapter on the Fisher King.

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.”

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

V. Gérard de Nerval, Sonnet El Desdichado.

V. Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy.

Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. “The Peace which passeth understanding” is a feeble translation of the content of this word.

Imprint

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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 vero, Senza tema d’infamia ti rispondo.

The Inferno

Let us go then, you and I, When the evening is spread out against the sky Like a patient etherized 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 windowpanes, The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the windowpanes 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 shirtsleeves, 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 fingertips. "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 ariettes 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 should 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? 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 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 quite 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 Disolve 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 old 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

toothbrush hangs on the wall, Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life.”

The last twist of the knife.

Morning at the Window

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens, And along the trampled edges of the street I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me Twisted faces from the bottom of the street, And tear from a passerby with muddy skirts An aimless smile that hovers in the air And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

The Boston Evening Transcript

The readers of the Boston Evening Transcript Sway in the wind like a field of ripe corn.

When evening quickens faintly in the street, Wakening the appetites of life in some And to others bringing the Boston Evening Transcript, I mount the steps and ring the bell, turning Wearily, as one would turn to nod goodbye to Rochefoucauld, If the street were time and he at the end of the street, And I say, “Cousin Harriet, here is the Boston Evening Transcript.”

Aunt Helen

Miss Helen Slingsby was my maiden aunt, And lived in a small house near a fashionable square Cared for by servants to the number of four. Now when she died there was silence in heaven And silence at her end of the street. The shutters were drawn and the undertaker wiped his feet— He was aware that this sort of thing had occurred before. The dogs were handsomely provided for, But shortly afterwards the

parrot died too. The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantelpiece, And the footman sat upon the dining-table Holding the second housemaid on his knees— Who had always been so careful while her mistress lived.

Cousin Nancy

Miss Nancy Ellicott Strode across the hills and broke them, Rode across the hills and broke them— The barren New England hills— Riding to hounds Over the cow-pasture.

Miss Nancy Ellicott smoked And danced all the modern dances; And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it, But they knew that it was modern.

Upon the glazen shelves kept watch Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith, The army of unalterable law.

Mr. Apollinax

When Mr. Apollinax visited the United States His laughter tinkled among the teacups. I thought of Fragilion, that shy figure among the birch-trees, And of Priapus in the shrubbery Gaping at the lady in the swing. In the palace of Mrs. Phlaccus, at Professor Channing-Cheetah's He laughed like an irresponsible foetus. His laughter was submarine and profound Like the old man of the sea's Hidden under coral islands Where worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green silence, Dropping from fingers of surf. I looked for the head of Mr. Apollinax rolling under a chair Or grinning over a screen With seaweed in its hair. I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over the hard turf As his dry and passionate talk devoured the afternoon. "He is a charming man"—"But after all what did he mean?"— "His pointed ears … He must be unbalanced,"— "There was something he said that I might have challenged." Of dowager Mrs. Phlaccus, and Professor and Mrs. Cheetah I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon.

Hysteria

As she laughed I was aware of becoming involved in her laughter and being part of it, until her teeth were only accidental stars with a talent for squad-drill. I was drawn in by short gasps, inhaled at each momentary recovery, lost finally in the dark caverns of her throat, bruised by the ripple of unseen muscles. An elderly waiter with trembling hands was hurriedly spreading a pink and white checked cloth over the rusty green iron table, saying: “If the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden, if the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden …” I decided that if the shaking of her breasts could be stopped, some of the fragments of the afternoon might be collected, and I concentrated my attention with careful subtlety to this end.

Conversation Galante

I observe: “Our sentimental friend the moon! Or possibly (fantastic, I confess) It may be Prester John’s balloon Or an old battered lantern hung aloft To light poor travellers to their distress.” She then: “How you digress!”

And I then: “Someone frames upon the keys That exquisite nocturne, with which we explain The night and moonshine; music which we seize To body forth our vacuity.” She then: “Does this refer to me?” “Oh no, it is I who am inane.”

“You, madam, are the eternal humorist, The eternal enemy of the absolute, Giving our vagrant moods the slightest twist! With your air indifferent and imperious At a stroke our mad poetics to confute—” And—“Are we then so serious?”

La Figlia Che Piange

O quam te memorem virgo …

Aeneid

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair— Lean on a garden urn— Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair— Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise— Fling them to the ground and turn With a fugitive resentment in your eyes: But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave, So I would have had her stand and grieve, So he would have left As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised, As the mind deserts the body it has used. I should find Some way incomparably light and deft, Some way we both should understand, Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather Compelled my imagination many days, Many days and many hours: Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers. And I wonder how they should have been together! I should have lost a gesture and a pose. Sometimes these cogitations still amaze The troubled midnight and the noon’s repose.

Gerontion

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

Measure for Measure

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, Spawned 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 juvescence 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 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, wenches!

Paint me a cavernous waste shore Cast in the unstilted 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 orangutan 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

Jackknifes 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 …

Le Grand Testament

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 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 percent 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.’s1

Le Directeur

Malheur à la malheureuse Tamise! Qui coule si pres du Spectateur. Le directeur Conservateur Du Spectateur Empeste la brise. Les actionnaires Réactionnaires Du Spectateur Conservateur Bras dessus bras dessous Font des tours A pas de loup. Dans un égout Une petite fille En guenilles Camarde Regarde Le directeur Du Spectateur Conservateur Et crève d'amour.

Mélange Adultère de Tout

En Amerique, professeur; En Angleterre, journaliste; C'est à grands pas et en sueur Que vous suivrez à peine ma piste. En Yorkshire, conferencier; A Londres, un peu banquier, Vous me paierez bien la tête. C'est à Paris que je me coiffe Casque noir de jemenfoutiste. En Allemagne, philosophe Surexcité par Emporheben Au grand air de Bergsteigleben; J'erre toujours de-ci de-là A divers coups de tra la la De Damas jusqu'à Omaha. Je celebrai mon jour de fête Dans une oasis d'Afrique Vêtu d'une peau de girafe.

On montrera mon cénotaphe Aux côtes brûlantes de Mozambique.

Lune de Miel

Ils ont vu les Pays-Bas, ils rentrent à Terre Haute; Mais une nuit d'été, les voici à Ravenne, A l'aise entre deux draps, chez deux centaines de punaises; La sueur aestivale, et une forte odeur de chienne Ils restent sur le dos écartant le genoux De quatre jambes molles tout gonflées de morsures. On relève le drap pour mieux égratigner. Moins d'une lieue d'ici est Saint Apollinaire In Classe, basilique connue des amateurs De chapitaux d'acanthe que touraoie le vent.

Ils vont prendre le train de huit heures Prolonger leurs misères de Padoue à Milan Ou se trouvent le Cène, et un restaurant pas cher. Lui pense aux pourboires, et redige son bilan. Ils auront vu la Suisse et traversé la France. Et Saint Apollinaire, raide et ascétique, Vieille usine désaffectée de Dieu, tient encore Dans ses pierres

ècroulantes la forme precise de Byzance.

Ode

To you particularly, and to all the Volscians Great hurt and mischief.

Coriolanus

Tired Subterrene laughter synchronous With silence from the sacred wood And bubbling of the uninspired Mephitic river. Misunderstood The accents of the now retired Profession of the calamus.

Tortured. When the bridegroom smoothed his hair There was blood upon the bed. Morning was already late. Children singing in the orchard (Io Hymen, Hymenæe) Succuba eviscerate.

Tortuous. By arrangement with Perseus The fooled resentment of the dragon Sailing before the wind at dawn. Golden apocalypse. Indignant At the cheap extinction of his taking-off. Now lies he there Tip to tip washed beneath Charles' Wagon.

The Hippopotamus

Similiter et omnes revereantur Diaconos, ut mandatum Jesu Christi; et Episcopum, ut Jesum Christum, existentem filium Patris; Presbyteros autem, ut concilium Dei et conjunctionem Apostolorum. Sine his Ecclesia non vocatur; de quibus suadeo vos sic habeo.

S. Ignatii Ad Trallianos

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

Colossians 4:16

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 inflections 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 kiss, While the True Church remains below Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

Dans le Restaurant

Le garçon délabré qui n’a rien à faire Que de se gratter les doigts et se pencher sur mon épaule: “Dans mon pays il fera temps pluvieux, Du vent, du grand soleil, et de la pluie; C’est ce qu’on appelle le jour de lessive des gueux.” (Bavard, baveux, à la croupe arrondie, Je te prie, au moins, ne bave pas dans la soupe). “Les saules trempés, et des bourgeons sur les ronces— C’est là, dans une averse, qu’on s’abrite. J’avais septtans, elle était plus petite. Elle etait toute mouillée, je lui ai donné des primavères.” Les tâches de son gilet montent au chiffre de trente-huit. “Je la chatouillais, pour la faire rire. J’éprouvais un instant de puissance et de délire.”

Mais alors, vieux lubrique, a cet âge … “Monsieur, le fait est dur. Il est venu, nous peloter, un gros chien; Moi j’avais peur, je l’ai quittee a mi-chemin. C’est dommage.”

Mais alors, tu as ton vautour! Va t’en te décrotter les rides du visage; Tiens, ma fourchette, décrasse-toi le crâne. De quel droit payes-tu des expériences comme moi? Tiens, voilà dix sous, pour la salle-de-bains.

Phlébas, le Phénicien, pendant quinze jours noyé, Oubliait les cris des mouettes et la houle de Cornouaille, Et les profits et les pertes, et la cargaison d’etain: Un courant de sous-mer l’emporta tres loin, Le repassant aux étapes de sa vie antérieure. Figurez-vous donc, c’etait un sort penible; Cependant, ce fut jadis un bel homme, de haute taille.

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 maisonette;

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 windowpanes. In the beginning was the Word.

In the beginning was the Word. Superfetation of τὸ ἔν, 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 pistilate, 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

ὤμοι, πέπληγμαι καιρίαν τληγὴν ἔσω.

Agamemnon

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 hornèd 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, Reorganized upon the floor She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown Sprawls at the windowsill 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 wisteria 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 droppings fall To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

The Waste Land2

“Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.”

Satyricon

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, 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 archduke'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,3 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,4 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.

Frisch weht der Wind Der Heimat zu Mein Irisch Kind, Wo weilest du?5

"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, Looking into the heart of light, the silence. Oed' und leer das Meer.6

Madame Sosostris, 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,7 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. 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,8 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.9 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,10 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.11 There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying “Stetson! “You who were with me in the ships at Mylae! “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,12 “Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again! “You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable—mon frère!”13

II

A Game of Chess

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,14 Glowed on the marble, where the glass Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines From which a golden Cupidon peeped out (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 In fattening the prolonged candle-flames, Flung their smoke into the laquearia,15 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 carvèd dolphin swam. Above the antique mantel was displayed As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene16 The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king17 So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale Filled all the desert with inviolable voice And still she cried, and still the world pursues, "Jug Jug" to dirty ears.18 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.

"My nerves are bad tonight. 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' alley19 Where the dead men lost their bones.

"What is that noise?" The wind under the door.20 "What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?" Nothing again nothing. "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—21 It's so elegant So intelligent "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.22

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said— I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself, 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, I said, 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. 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 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. 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.23 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; Departed, have left no addresses. By the waters of Leman 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 Musing upon the king my brother's wreck And on the king my father's death before him.24 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 hear25 The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring26 Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring. O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter27 And on her daughter They wash their feet in soda water Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!28

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

Unreal City Under the brown fog of a winter noon Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants29 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 upward from the desk, when the human engine waits Like a taxi throbbing waiting, I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,30 Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,31 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. 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; 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; 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 and32 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”33 And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street. O City city, I can sometimes hear Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street, The pleasant whining of a mandoline And a clatter and a chatter from within Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls Of Magnus Martyr hold34 Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

The river sweats35 Oil and tar The barges drift With the turning tide Red sails 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 Leicester36 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

“Trams and dusty trees. Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew37 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[38]

Burning burning burning burning[39] O Lord Thou pluckest me out[40] O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

IV

Death by Water

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead, Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep 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[41]

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

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 mount in mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit 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 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 drop42 But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you? When I count, there are only you and I together43 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 lamentation44 Who are those hooded hordes swarming Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth Ringed by the flat horizon only 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 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. 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 Datta: what have we given?45 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 solicitor46 In our empty rooms Da Dayadhvam: I have heard the key Turn in the door once and turn once only47 We think of the key, each in his prison Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison Only at nightfall, aetherial 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

I sat upon the shore Fishing, with the arid plain behind me48 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 affina49 Quando fiam ceu chelidon—O swallow swallow50 Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie51 These fragments I have shored against my ruins Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.52 Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih53

The Hollow Men

Mistah Kurtz—he dead.

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.

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.

Ash-Wednesday

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 agèd 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 blessèd 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 vans 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 Prophesy 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, jaggèd, like an old man’s mouth drivelling, beyond repair, Or the toothed gullet of an agèd 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.

IV

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 dolour 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.

VI

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.

Juvenilia

A Fable for Feasters

In England, long before that royal Mormon King Henry VIII found out that monks were quacks, And took their lands and money from the poor men, And brought their abbeys tumbling at their backs, There was a village founded by some Norman Who levied on all travelers his tax; Nearby this hamlet was a monastary Inhabited by a band of friars merry.

They were possessors of rich lands and wide, An orchard, and a vineyard, and a dairy; Whenever some old villainous baron died, He added to their hoards—a deed which ne'er he Had done before—their fortune multiplied, As if they had been kept by a kind fairy. Alas! no fairy visited their host, Oh, no; much worse than that, they had a ghost.

Some wicked and heretical old sinner Perhaps, who had been walled up for his crimes; At any rate, he sometimes came to dinner, Whene'er the monks were having merry times. He stole the fatter cows and left the thinner To furnish all the milk—upset the chimes, And once he set the prior on the steeple, To the astonishment of all the people.

When Christmas time was near the Abbot vowed They'd eat their meal from ghosts and phantoms free, The fiend must stay home—no ghosts allowed At this exclusive feast. From over sea He purchased at his own expense a crowd Of relics from a Spanish saint—said he: "If ghosts come uninvited, then, of course, I'll be compelled to keep them off by force."

He drenched the gown he wore with holy water, The turkeys, capons, boars, they were to eat, He even soakt the uncomplaining porter Who stood outside the door from head to feet. To make a rather lengthy story shorter, He left no wise precaution incomplete; He doused the room in which they were to dine, And watered everything except the wine.

So when all preparations had been made, The jovial epicures sat down to table. The

menus of that time I am afraid I don't know much about—as well's I'm able I'll go through the account: They made a raid On every bird and beast in Aesop's fable To fill out their repast, and pies and puddings, And jellies, pasties, cakes among the good things.

A mighty peacock standing on both legs With difficulty kept from toppling over, Next came a viand made of turtle eggs, And after that a great pie made of plover, And flagons which perhaps held several kegs Of ale, and cheese which they kept under cover. Last, a boar's head, which to bring in took for pages, His mouth an apple held, his skull held sausages.

Over their Christmas wassail the monks dozed, A fine old drink, though now gone out of use— His feet upon the table superposed Each wisht he had not eaten so much goose. The Abbot with proposing every toast Had drank more than he ought t' have of grape juice. The lights began to burn distinctly blue, As in ghost stories lights most always do.

The doors, though barred and bolted most securely, Gave way—my statement nobody can doubt, Who knows the well known fact, as you do surely— That ghosts are fellows whom you can't keep out; It is a thing to be lamented sorely Such slippery folk should be allowed about, For often they drop in at awkward moments, As everybody'll know who reads this romance.

The Abbot sat as pasted to his chair, His eye became the size of any dollar, The ghost then took him roughly by the hair And bade him come with him, in accents hollow. The friars could do nought but gape and stare, The spirit pulled him rudely by the collar, And before any one could say "O jiminy!" The pair had vanisht swiftly up the chimney.

Naturally every one searcht everywhere, But not a shred of Bishop could be found, The monks, when anyone questioned, would declare St. Peter'd snatcht to heaven their lord renowned, Though the wicked said (such rascals are not rare) That the

Abbot’s course lay nearer underground; But the church straightaway put to his name the handle of Saint, thereby rebuking all such scandal.

But after this the monks grew most devout, And lived on milk and breakfast food entirely; Each morn from four to five one took a knout And flogged his mates ’til they grew good and friarly. Spirits from that time forth they did without, And lived the admiration of the shire. We Got the veracious record of those doings From an old manuscript found in the ruins.

A Lyric

If space and time, as sages say, Are things that cannot be, The fly that lives a single day Has lived as long as we. But let us live while yet we may, While love and life are free, For time is time, and runs away, Though sages disagree.

The flowers I sent thee when the dew Was trembling on the vine Were withered ere the wild bee flew To suck the eglantine. But let us haste to pluck anew Nor mourn to see them pine, And though the flowers of life be few Yet let them be divine.

Song

When We Came Home Across the Hill

When we came home across the hill No leaves were fallen from the trees; The gentle fingers of the breeze Had torn no quivering cobweb down.

The hedgerow bloomed with flowers still, No withered petals lay beneath; But the wild roses in your wreath Were faded, and the leaves were brown.

Before Morning

While all the East was weaving red with gray, The flowers at the window turned toward dawn, Petal on petal, waiting for the day, Fresh flowers, withered flowers, flowers of dawn.

This morning’s flowers and flowers of yesterday Their fragrance drifts across the

room at dawn, Fragrance of bloom and fragrance of decay, Fresh flowers, withered flowers, flowers of dawn.

Circe’s Palace

Around her fountain which flows With the voice of men in pain, Are flowers that no man knows. Their petals are fanged and red With hideous streak and stain. They sprang from the limbs of the dead.— We shall not come here again.

Panthers rise from their lairs In the forest which thickens below, Along the garden stairs The sluggish python lies; The peacock’s walk, stately and slow And they look at us with the eyes Of men whom we knew long ago.

On a Portrait

Among a crowd of tenuous dreams, unknown To us of restless brain and weary feet, Forever hurrying, up and down the street, She stands at evening in the room alone.

Not like a tranquil goddess carved of stone But evanescent, as if one should meet A pensive lamia in some wood-retreat, An immaterial fancy of one’s own.

No meditations glad or ominous Disturb her lips, or move the slender hands; Her dark eyes keep their secrets hid from us, Beyond the circle of our thoughts she stands.

The parrot on the bar, a silent spy, Regards her with a patient curious eye.

Song

The Moonflower Opens to the Moth

The moonflower opens to the moth, The mist crawls in from sea; A great white bird, a snowy owl, Slips from the alder tree.

Whiter the flowers, love, you hold, Than the white mist on the sea; Have you no brighter tropic flowers With scarlet life, for me?

Nocturne

Romeo, grand sérieux, to importune Guitar and hat in hand, beside the gate With Juliet, in the usual debate Of love, beneath a bored but courteous moon; The conversation failing, strikes some tune Banal, and out of pity for their fate Behind the wall I have some servant wait, Stab, and the lady sinks into a swoon.

Blood looks effective on the moonlit ground— The hero smiles; in my best mode oblique Rolls toward the moon a frenzied eye profound, (No need of “Love forever?”—“Love next week?”) While female readers all in tears are drowned:— “The perfect climax all true lovers seek!”

Humoresque

(After J. Laforgue)

One of my marionettes is dead Though not yet tired of the game— But weak in body as in head, (A jumping-jack has such a frame).

But this deceasèd marionette I rather liked: a common face, (The kind of face that we forget) Pinched in a comic, dull grimace;

Half bullying, half imploring air, Mouth twisted to the latest tune; His who-the-devil-are-you stare; Translated, maybe, to the moon.

With Limbo’s other useless things Haranguing spectres, set him there; “The snappiest fashion since last spring’s, “The newest style, on Earth, I swear.

“Why don’t you people get some class? (Feebly contemptuous of nose), “Your damned thin moonlight, worse than gas— “Now in New York”—and so it goes.

Logic a marionette’s, all wrong Of premises; yet in some star A hero!—Where would he belong? But, even at that, what mask bizarre!

Spleen

Sunday: this satisfied procession Of definite Sunday faces; Bonnets, silk hats, and

conscious graces In repetition that displaces Your mental self-possession By this unwarranted digression.

Evening, lights, and tea! Children and cats in the alley; Dejection unable to rally Against this dull conspiracy.

And Life, a little bald and gray, Languid, fastidious, and bland, Waits, hat and gloves in hand, Punctilious of tie and suit (Somewhat impatient of delay) On the doorstep of the Absolute.

Ode

For the Hour That Is Left Us Fair Harvard, with Thee

For the hour that is left us Fair Harvard, with thee, Ere we face the importunate years, In thy shadow we wait, while thy presence dispels Our vain hesitations and fears. And we turn as thy sons ever turn, in the strength Of the hopes that thy blessings bestow, From the hopes and ambitions that sprang at thy feet To the thoughts of the past as we go.

Yet for all of these years that to-morrow has lost We are still the less able to grieve, With so much that of Harvard we carry away In the place of the life that we leave. And only the years that efface and destroy Give us also the vision to see What we owe for the future, the present, and past, Fair Harvard, to thine and to thee.

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