

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,²
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,

2. Cf. Ezekiel 2:7.

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,³
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*⁴

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,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
*Od' und leer das Meer.*⁵

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,⁶

3. Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:5.

4. V. *Tristan und Isolde*, I, verses 5-8.

5. Id. III, verse 24.

6. 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

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,

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.⁸

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,⁹

And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

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.

7. Cf. Baudelaire:

Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,

Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.

8. Cf. *Inferno*, III, 55-7:

si lunga tratta

di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto

che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta.

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

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

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.¹⁰
 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,¹¹
 'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
 'You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!¹²

10. A phenomenon which I have often noticed.
 11. Cf. the Dirge in Webster's *White Devil*.
 12. V. Baudelaire, Preface to *Fleurs du Mal*.

II. A Game of Chess

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,¹³
 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,¹⁴
 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

13. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii. 190.

14. Laquearia. V. *Aeneid*, I. 726:
 dependent lychni laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt.

As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene¹⁵
 The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king¹⁶
 So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale¹⁷
 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.

'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' alley¹⁸
 Where the dead men lost their bones.

'What is that noise?'
 The wind under the door.¹⁹
 'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'
 Nothing again nothing.
 'Do
 'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

15. Sylvan scene: V. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 140.

16. V. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vi, Philomela.

17. Cf. Part III, i. 204.

18. Cf. Part III, i. 195.

19. Cf. Webster: 'Is the wind in that door still?'

'Nothing?'

I remember
 Those are pearls that were his eyes.
 'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'²⁰

But

O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—
 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 to-morrow?
 '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.²¹

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.

20. Cf. Part I, i. 37, 48.

21. Cf. the game of chess in Middleton's *Women beware Women*.

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 alright, 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.²²

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.²³

White bodies naked on the low damp ground

And bones cast in a little low dry garret,

22. V. Spenser, *Prothalamion*.

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

Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.
But at my back from time to time I hear²⁴
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring²⁵
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.

O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter²⁶
And on her daughter

They wash their feet in soda water

*Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*²⁷

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 currants²⁸

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.

24. Cf. Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress."

25. 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 . . .

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

27. V. Verlaine, *Parsifal*.

28. 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.

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,²⁹

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,³⁰

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)

29. 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 genitivaque venit imago.

Arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa

Dicta Iovis firmat; gravis 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.

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

Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.
 I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dug
 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 unrequited, 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 and³¹
 Paces about her room again, alone,
 She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
 And puts a record on the gramophone.

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

'This music crept by me upon the waters'³²
 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 hold³³
 Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

The river sweats³⁴
 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 Leicester³⁵

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

33. 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.).

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

35. 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.

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 Kew³⁶
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

36. Cf. *Purgatorio*, V. 133:
‘Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;
Siena mi fe,’ disfecemi Maremma.’

To Carthage then I came³⁷

Burning burning burning burning³⁸

O Lord Thou pluckest me out³⁹

O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

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

38. 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.

39. 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.

IV. Death by Water

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep seas 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 Said⁴⁰

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 mountain 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

40. 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.

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 drop⁴¹
 But there is no water

 Who is the third who walks always beside you?
 When I count, there are only you and I together⁴²
 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?

41. This is *Turdus aonalaschkae pallasi*, the hermit-thrush which I have heard in Quebec County. Chapman says (*Handbook of Birds in 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.

42. 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.

What is that sound high in the air
 Murmur of maternal lamentation⁴³
 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 rooftop
 Co co rico co rico

43. This line and the following nine lines, 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.

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?⁴⁴

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 spider⁴⁵
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms

DA

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key⁴⁶

44. '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.

45. 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.

46. 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.

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, 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 me⁴⁷

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*⁴⁸

Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow⁴⁹

*Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie*⁵⁰

These fragments I have shored against my ruins

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.⁵¹

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih⁵²

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

48. 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.

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

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

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

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