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# *The Waste Land*

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**by T.S. Eliot**

Styled by **LimpidSoft**

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*"Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse  
oculis meis  
vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri  
dicerent:  
Sibylla ti theleis; respondebat illa:  
apothanein thelo."*

# 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.

## I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

---

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,<sup>1</sup>  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun  
beats,<sup>2</sup>

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the  
cricket no relief,

And the dry stone no sound of water. Only  
There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ezekiel 2:1.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:5

## I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

---

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<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,

---

<sup>3</sup>V. =Tristan und Isolde, i, verses 5-8.

<sup>4</sup>Id. iii, verse 24.

## I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

---

Had a bad cold, nevertheless  
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,  
With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,<sup>5</sup>  
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.

---

<sup>5</sup>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.



## I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

---

I see crowds of people, walking round in a  
ring.<sup>6</sup>

Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,  
Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:  
One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City,<sup>7</sup>  
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.<sup>8</sup>

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>Cf. the Dirge in Webster's White Devil.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Baudelaire:

"Fourmillante cite,, cite; pleine de reves,  
Ou le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant."

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Inferno, iii. 55-7.

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

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Inferno, iv. 25-7:

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

## I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

---

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.<sup>10</sup>  
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,  
"Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!  
"You! hypocrite lecteur!— mon semblable,—  
mon frere!"<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

<sup>11</sup>V. Baudelaire, Preface to *Fleurs du Mal*.

## II. A GAME OF CHESS

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished  
throne,<sup>12</sup>  
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,

---

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Antony and Cleopatra, II. ii., l. 190.

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,<sup>13</sup>  
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.  
Huge sea-wood fed with copper  
Burned green and orange, framed by the  
    coloured stone,  
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.  
Above the antique mantel was displayed  
As though a window gave upon the sylvan  
    scene<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Laquearia. V. Aeneid, I. 726:  
dependent lychni laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt.

<sup>14</sup>Sylvan scene. V. Milton, Paradise Lost, iv. 140

The change of Philomel, by the barbarous  
king<sup>15</sup>

So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale<sup>16</sup>  
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."<sup>17</sup>

"Speak to me. Why do you never speak.  
Speak.

---

<sup>15</sup>V. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vi, Philomela.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Part III, l. 204.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. the game of chess in Middleton's *Women beware Women*.

"What are you thinking of? What thinking?  
What?

"I never know what you are thinking.  
Think."

I think we are in rats' alley<sup>18</sup>  
Where the dead men lost their bones.

"What is that noise?"  
The wind under the door.<sup>19</sup>

"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?"<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Part III, l. 195.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Webster: "Is the wind in that door still?"

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Part I, l. 37, 48.

But

O 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.

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,<sup>21</sup>

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.

---

<sup>21</sup>V. Spenser, Prothalamion.



(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<sup>22</sup>, 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.

---

<sup>22</sup>This spelling occurs also in the Hogarth Press edition— Editor.

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.  
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

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

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.<sup>23</sup>

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.

---

<sup>23</sup>Cf. *The Tempest*, I. ii.

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

But at my back from time to time I hear<sup>24</sup>  
The sound of horns and motors, which shall  
bring<sup>25</sup>  
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.  
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter<sup>26</sup>  
And on her daughter  
They wash their feet in soda water  
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la  
coupole!<sup>27</sup>

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

Unreal City  
Under the brown fog of a winter noon

---

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Marvell, To His Coy Mistress.

<sup>25</sup>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..."

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

<sup>27</sup>V. Verlaine, Parsifal.

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant  
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants<sup>28</sup>  
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,<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup>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.

"Carriage and insurance free": "cost, insurance and freight"-Editor.

<sup>29</sup>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

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

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,<sup>30</sup>  
The typist home at teatime, clears her

---

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.

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

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

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



### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

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 and<sup>31</sup>  
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"<sup>32</sup>  
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria  
Street.

O City city, I can sometimes hear  
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,

---

<sup>31</sup>V. Goldsmith, the song in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

<sup>32</sup>V. *The Tempest*, as above.

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

The pleasant whining of a mandoline  
And a clatter and a chatter from within  
Where fishermen lounge at noon: where the  
    walls  
Of Magnus Martyr hold<sup>33</sup>  
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and  
    gold.

The river sweats<sup>34</sup>  
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.

---

<sup>33</sup>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.).

<sup>34</sup>The Song of the (three) Thames-daughters begins here. From line 292 to 306 inclusive they speak in turn. V. *Gutterdämmerung*, III. i: the Rhine-daughters.

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

Weialala leia  
Wallala leialala

Elizabeth and Leicester<sup>35</sup>  
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

---

<sup>35</sup>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."

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

"Trams and dusty trees.  
Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew  
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees<sup>36</sup>  
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<sup>37</sup>

Burning burning burning burning<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup>Cf. Purgatorio, v. 133:

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

<sup>37</sup>V. St. Augustine's Confessions: "to Carthage then I came,  
where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears."

<sup>38</sup>The complete text of the Buddha's Fire Sermon (which corre-

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

---

O Lord Thou pluckest me out<sup>39</sup>

O Lord Thou pluckest

Burning

---

sponds 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.

<sup>39</sup>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 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<sup>40</sup>

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

---

<sup>40</sup>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.



## V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

---

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  
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<sup>41</sup>  
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop  
But there is no water  
Who is the third who walks always beside  
you?<sup>42</sup>  
When I count, there are only you and I  
together  
But when I look ahead up the white road

---

<sup>41</sup>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.

<sup>42</sup>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.

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?<sup>43</sup>

What is that sound high in the air  
Murmur of maternal lamentation  
Who are those hooded hordes swarming  
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked  
earth

Ringed by the flat horizon only  
What is the city over the mountains  
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet  
air

Falling towers  
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria  
Vienna London

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<sup>43</sup>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.

Über diese Lieder lacht der Bürger beleidigt, der Heilige und Seher hört sie mit Tränen."

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?

My friend, blood shaking my heart<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>

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

DA

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<sup>44</sup>"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.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. Webster, *The White Devil*, v. vi:

Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider  
Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs."

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key<sup>46</sup>  
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

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<sup>46</sup>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."

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me<sup>47</sup>  
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<sup>48</sup>  
Quando fiam ceu chelidon— O swallow  
swallow<sup>49</sup>

Le Prince d'Aquitaine a la tour abolie<sup>50</sup>  
These fragments I have shored against my  
ruins

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad  
again.<sup>51</sup>

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.  
Shantih shantih shantih<sup>52</sup>

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

<sup>48</sup>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."

<sup>49</sup>V. Pervigilium Veneris. Cf. *Philomela* in Parts II and III.

<sup>50</sup>V. Gerard de Nerval, *Sonnet El Desdichado*.

<sup>51</sup>V. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*.

<sup>52</sup>Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad.  
'The Peace which passeth understanding' is a feeble translation

## V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

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of the content of this word.