T. S. ELIOT
THE WASTE LAND

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A note on The Waste Land

2. A one-page outline of the poem

3. Images of The Waste Land

4. The text of The Waste Land with the outline inserted

5. The Waste Land: Some references

6. T. S. Eliot’s notes to The Waste Land

7. Geoffrey Chaucer, “Whan that aprill” from Canterbury Tales
1. A NOTE ON “THE WASTE LAND”

A dream of the collective unconscious of Western civilization

You can experience your dreams in at least two ways. One way is within the immediacy of the subconscious itself, while you toss in sleep. There the dream’s power is direct, unobjectified, totally engaging. You are the dream and all the characters in it. The other way is by analyzing the dream, perhaps on the psychiatrist’s couch where you may attempt to objectify the dream and distance yourself from it so as to study, understand, and integrate it into your consciousness.

Likewise a poem. You can objectify it, dissect the images, scan the rhythm, search down the allusions – in short, study it. But the poem, etherized upon your table, must be brought back to life, to a personal, phenomenological experience of immediacy, where its force grips you directly, dramatically, and where you can live the dream over again, this time consciously.

T.S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land” is perhaps the most studied, poked, prodded, dissected poem of the century. And there is no doubt that one’s enjoyment of it may be enhanced by knowing the wide range of literary and mythic sources that Eliot drew upon. The ancient vegetation myths of the Phoenician god Attis, for example, who had to die each year in order to restore nature’s vitality. Or the Grail legend of the Fisher King whose tragic impotence brought sterility and blight upon his kingdom until the new Knight came to the Chapel Perilous and, through an ordeal, restored life to the land.

But these symbols are not found primarily in the footnotes of literary criticism or even in tomes on cultural anthropology. They arise from the depths of one’s own unconscious, perhaps from the collective unconscious of the whole race. How much richer, then, when Eliot paints the death of modern civilization against the background of these symbols. The mythic unconscious knows that the drought of March is the promise of April’s sweet showers, but does the “demythologized” modern and postmodern consciousness have any hope of new life? Can the buried god, the Hanged Man, arise this spring in the Waste Land? Will the polluted Thames overflow this year and wash us in fertility? Is sex anything more than violation?

This reading of “The Waste Land” hopes to restore the poem to the realm of immediacy, to ask these questions and evoke these symbols at that primal level whence arise the basic need of humankind: ritual, dance, word, imagination. Try to experience the poem as a collective dream of Western civilization as Eliot experienced that in post-war 1922. Male and female voices alternate in series of vignettes of corruption (I through III), death (IV), and possible resurrection (V). Scenes of sex and fertility, death and life, myth and ritual, the past and the present (with its class differences) mingle in a dialectical harmony that leads to the possibility of a “peace that passes understanding.” The point of our reading will not be to analyze its possible referents but to experience this collective dream personally, existentially.
2. THE WASTE LAND
OUTLINE

EPIGRAPH

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD
   April
   Marie, the archduke’s cousin
   The prophet
   Tristan
   The hyacinth girl
   Madame Sosostris
   Unreal city

II. A GAME OF CHESS
   Upstairs: the boudoir
      The room
      The woman
      Music from below
      What shall we ever do?
   Downstairs: the pub
      About Lil and Albert

III. THE FIRE SERMON
   The Thames: the nymphs have departed
   The dull canal
   Pjilomela
   Mr. Eugenides
   Tiresias and the typist
   Lower Thames Street
   The women’s dirge
   To Carthage then I came

IV. DEATH BY WATER
   Phlebas the Phoenician

V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID
   Death and dying
   Passage through the mountains and the rocks
   No water
   Who is that third?
   Barbarians, falling towers
   The nightmare
   The chapel: Dead bones can harm no one
   Rain
   Thunder
      Datta: give
      Dyadhvam: be compassionate
      Damyata: self-discipline
   Fishing, with the arid plain behind
   The fragments
   Hieronymo mad again
   Shantih shantih shantih
3. IMAGES OF THE WASTE LAND

Epigram

The poem begins with the Sibyl/prophetess, who could foresee the future, declaring that she wants to die. The poem touches on themes of corruption, death, and possible resurrection.

The cave of the Sibyl of Cumae, north of Naples, Italy:
I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

April: The protagonist of the dream (hereinafter “P”) muses on the cruelty of an April spring that seems not entirely promising.

[Image of a desert landscape]

The voice of Countess Marie Larisch, the Archduke Rudolf’s cousin, recalls the simple joys of youth as well as the boredom of the present.

[Image of Countess Marie Larisch]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayerling_Incident#Exhumations_and_Forensic_Evidence

* * *

A wizened Old Testament prophet accosts P and tells him he lives in a desert where humankind no longer stands tall but is likened to a handful of dust: death.
A lover’s scene: A verse from Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde sings of a man’s longing for his lover. She responds, plaintively, that once, a year ago, he gave her hyacinths, a symbol of rebirth. He responds that, after their love-making he fell apart, knew nothing but silence. The scene closes with another verse from Tristan: “The sea is void and bleak.”

Madame Sosostris, Egyptian tarot reader: She is introduced by a barker’s voice and then begins to tell P’s fortune: Fear death by water. She fears the police.

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London, the unreal City: I had not thought that death had done so many. Will the corpse you planted last year begin to sprout this year?

Metafiction? You, hypocrite reader, my likeness, my brother!
II. A GAME OF CHESS: HIGH AND LOW SOCIETY

A. UPSTAIRS: HIGH SOCIETY

Description of madame’s boudoir: mirror, candelabra, jewels and perfume, ceiling, mantelpiece, picture of Phlomena. P enters, conversation between P and the nervous lady, interrupted by honky-tonk piano music from the tavern downstairs.

B. DOWNSTAIRS: LOWER-CLASS TAVERN SOCIETY

The monologue: Albert has been demobilized from the British army after World War I. Lil, his wife, isn’t looking very good: bad teeth, a long face: she’s had an abortion. The narrator advises her to pull herself together lest someone else show Albert “a good time.”

As the barkeep urges them to finish (“Hurry up please it’s time”), the women leave as the men sing “Good night, ladies.”

The woman from upstairs ends the scene with an Ophelia-like “Good night, good night.”
III. THE FIRE SERMON:
THE DEATH OF SEXUALITY

Part One: The violation of the Thames
The narrator goes back and forth between the idyllic Themes of the 16C and today, when rats remind one of the end of fertility and the death of the kings, now only dry bones.

There’s a vulgar song about Mrs. Porter’s brothel, contrasted with the innocence of children’s voices singing in a religious choir.

Philomela’s violation is recalled: “Jug, jug” as she tries to name Tereus, the rapist.

Part Two: A weekend tryst

Mr. Eugenides’ invitation to a weekend assignation at the Metropole, Brighton.

Part Three: Tiresias and the violation of the typist

“Well now that’s done, and I’m glad it’s over.”
Part Four: The Thames now and in the 16th century

Music flows from the typist’s room down to a bar in Lower Thames Street, leading to the counterpunctual song about (1) the dirty Thames today and (2) the idyllic 16C Thames when the lovers Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester float down the river on an elegant ship. The Thames Maidens’ song

Part Five: The sexual experiences of three young lower-class women

(1) by Richmond

(2) at Moorgate

(3) on Margate Sands.

Again, the Thames Maidens’ song.

Conclusion: Augustine at Carthage: Burning.
IV. DEATH BY WATER

The corruption of life, fertility, and sexuality culminates in the death of Plebas the Phoenician. “Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.”

The lowest point of the poem.
V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

“The torchlight red on sweaty faces”

“We who were living are now dying / With a little patience.”

Here there is no water but only rock

1Eliot wrote to Bertrand Russell on 15 October 1923: “It gives me great pleasure to know that you like The Waste Land, and especially Part V, which in my opinion is not only the best part, but the only part which justifies the whole at all.” Russell’s Autobiography, II, 173.
Who is the third who walks always beside you? (Luke 24:13 ff.)

The hooded hordes and falling towers

The nightmare
The chapel perilous

“Dry bones can harm no one.”

The thunder speaks


The closing

“I sat upon the shore / Fishing, with the arid plain behind me.

“These fragments I have shored against my ruins.”


“Shantih shantih shantih”

END
4. THE WASTE LAND
1922
[with the outline inserted]

EPGRAM

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

[I once saw with my own eyes the Sibyl at Cumae hanging in a cage. And when the young men said to her,
“Sibyl, what do you want?” she replied, “I want to die.”]

For Ezra Pound
il miglior fabbro

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

[April]

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.

[The archduke’s cousin]

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.]
“T’im not Russian at all. I’m from Lituania, a genuine German.”
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.

[The prophet]

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

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

[The wind blows fresh
And takes us home.
My Irish maid
Where do you dwell?]

[The hyacinth girl]

‘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.]
Void and bleak the sea.

[Madame Sosostris]

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards.

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.

[Narrator]

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.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying ‘Stetson!  
‘You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!  
‘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! hypocrize lectrue!—mon semblable,—mon frère!’  
[You, hypocrite reader! – my likeness, – my brother!]

II. A GAME OF CHESS

Upstairs: the boudoir

THE Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Glowed on the marble, where the glass  
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines  
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out  
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)  
Doubled the flames of seven- branched 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,  
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 scene  
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king  
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.  

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.  

[The dialogue]  
‘My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.  
‘Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.  
‘What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?  
‘I never know what you are thinking. Think.’
I think we are in rats’ alley  
Where the dead men lost their bones.

‘What is that noise?’
   
The wind under the door.

‘What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?’
   
Nothing again nothing.

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

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

But
O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—
It’s so elegant
So intelligent

‘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.

Downstairs: The pub

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.
(Shes 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

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 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.
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat’s foot only, year to year.
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
O the moon shone on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter.
They wash their feet in soda water
[Et, Œ ces voix d’enfants, chantant dans la coupole!]
[And, oh, the children’s voices singing in the cupola!]

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

[Narrator]

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
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.

[The typist]

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,
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,
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 foorsuffered 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 on 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
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone.

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

[The Thames maidens’ chant]

The river sweats
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 Leicester
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
    Weia lala leia
    Wallala leia lala

[Chastity lost]

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

The third woman:
‘On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing.’
    la la, weia la la leia

[The Fire Sermon]
To Carthage then I came
Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

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 SAID

[Death and dying]

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 place 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

[Passage through mountains and rocks]

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

Drip drop... drip drop... drip drop... drop... drop... drop... drop...

But there is no water

[The third person]

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

[Barbarians]

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
Unreal
[Nightmare]
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.

[The chapel: Dry bones can harm no one]
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

[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.

[What the thunder said]

D A

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

D A

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, aetherial rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus
D A

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

CONCLUSION

[These fragments against my ruins]

I sat upon the shore Fishing, with
the arid plain behind me Shall I at least set my
lands in order?

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down [Poi

s’ascose nel foco che gli affina]
Then he hid himself in the refining fire.

[Quando fiam uti chelidon]
When will I become like a swallow?

—O swallow swallow

Le Prince d’Aquitaine à la tour abolie
The Prince of Aquitaine, his tower demolished These

fragments I have shored against my ruins Why then Ile fit

you! Hieronymo’s mad againe! Datta. Dayadhvam.

Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih
5. THE WASTE LAND

SOME REFERENCES

(“NA” = The Norton Anthology)

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

“Bin gar keine Russin, stamm’ aus Litauen, echt deutsch”
“I am not Russian at all; I come from Lithuania, a true German.”

“Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee”
Eliot had met King Ludwig’s second cousin Countess Marie Larisch and talked with her. Although he had probably not read the countess’s book My Past, which discusses King Ludwig at length, he got information about her life and times from her in person, and the remarks made in lines 7-17 are hers. They distill a sense of romantic decadence that Eliot associates with this period of European history.

“In the mountains, there you feel free.”
A translation of the opening of a Bavarian folksong celebrating King Ludwig and lamenting his drowning.

“And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief.”

“There is shadow under this red rock”
The rock and the importance of its shadow is a theme that reoccurs throughout the whole Bible. In the hot desert lands of the Middle-East a rock that provides shade is very valuable: not only could you find shade from the hot sun, but you could even find water there. A typical example can be found in Isaiah 32.3: the “righteous king... shall be...as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

“Frish weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du?”
Fresh blows the wind
to the homeland;
my Irish child,
where are you waiting? (NA)

“Oed’ und leer das Meer”
Cf. Tristan und Isolde, III, verse 24 [Eliot’s note]. In act 3 of Tristan und Isolde, Tristan lies dying. He is waiting for Isolde to come to him from Cornwall, but a shepherd, appointed to watch for her sail, can only report:

“Oed’ und leer das Meer”
Waste and empty is the sea. (NA)

“Sosostris”
A mock Egyptian name (suggested to Eliot by “Sesostris, the Sorceress of Ecbatana,” the name assumed by a character in Aldous Huxley’s novel Crome Yellow who dresses up as a gypsy to tell fortunes at a fair). (NA)

“Pack of cards”
The four suits of the Tarot pack, discussed by Jessie Weston in From Ritual to Romance, are the cup, lance, sword, and dish - the life symbols found in the Grail story. Weston noted that “today the Tarot has fallen somewhat into disrepute, being principally used for purposes of divination.” (NA)
“Phoenician Sailor,”
See part 4. Phlebas the Phoenician and Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant - both of whom appear later in the poem - are different phases of the same symbolic character, here identified as the “Phoenician Sailor.” Mr. Eugenides exports “currants” (line 210). The drowned Phlebas floats in the “current” (line 315).

“(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)”
The line is from Shakespeare’s Tempest (I.2.398). Ariel’s song to the shipwrecked Ferdinand, who was “sitting on a bank / Weeping again the King my father’s wrack,” when “this music crept by me on the waters.” The song is about the supposed drowning of Ferdinand’s father, Alonso. The Waste Land contains many references to The Tempest. Ferdinand is associated with Phlebas and Mr. Eugenides and, therefore, with the “drowned Phoenician sailor.” (NA)

“Belladonna”
Jonsonian Italian name meaning “beautiful lady”. Belladonna is also an eye cosmetic and a poison - the deadly nightshade. (NA)

“Lady of the rocks”
The title “Lady of the Rocks” suggests Madonna (the Virgin Mary) and, therefore, the Madonna of the Rocks, as in Leonardo da Vinci’s painting; the rocks symbolize the church (see note above).

“The man with three staves”
Life-force symbol, associated by Eliot with the Fisher King. (NA)

“The wheel”
The wheel of fortune, whose turning represents the reversals of human life. (NA)

“One eyed merchant”
I.e., Mr. Eugenides, “one-eyed” because the figure is in profile on the card and also a suggestion of evil or crookedness, or a pirate. (NA)

“The hanged man”
On his card in the Tarot pack he is shown hanging from one foot from a T-shaped cross. He symbolizes the self-sacrifice of the fertility god who is killed in order that his resurrection may bring fertility once again to land and people. (NA)

“A crowd flowed over London bridge, so many”
Dante, just outside the gate of hell, has seen “the wretched souls of those who lived without disgrace and without praise.” In his essay on Baudelaire, Eliot argued that in a sense it was better to be positively evil than to be neither good nor evil. (NA)

“I had not thought death had undone so many”
In Limbo, the first circle of hell, Dante has found the virtuous heathens, who lived before Christianity and are, therefore, eternally unable to achieve their desire of seeing God (NA).

“Mylae”
The battle of Mylae (260 B.C.) in the First Punic War, which, like World War I, was fought for economic reasons. (NA)

“O keep far hence the dog”
Cf. the Dirge in Webster’s White Devil. [Eliot’s note] In the play by John Webster (d. 1625), the dirge, sung by Cornelia, has the lines “But keep the wolf far hence, that’s foe to men, /For with his nails he’ll dig them up again.” Eliot makes the “wolf” into a “dog”, which is not a foe but a friend to humans. There may be a reference to Sirius, the Dog Star, which is important in Egyptian mythology as heralding the fertilizing floods of the Nile (this is discussed by Weston). (NA)

“‘You! Hypocrite lecteur!---mon semblable,---mon frere!’”
“Hypocrite reader! - my likeness! - my brother!” (NA)
Cf. Baudelaire, Preface to Fleurs du Mal. [Eliot’s note] The passage is the last line of the introductory poem “Au Lecteur” (“To the Reader”) in Baudelaire’s Fleurs du Mal. “Au Lecteur” describes man as sunk in stupidity, sin, and evil, but the worst in “each man’s foul menagerie of sin” is boredom, the “monstre delicat” - “You know him, reader”.
II. A GAME OF CHESS

“The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,”
Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, ii, 1.190. [Eliot’s note] “The barge she sat in, like a burnish’d throne./Burn’d on the water.” In the opening lines of this passage Eliot makes a lot of references to Shakespeare’s play, particularly the following famous scene in which Enobarbus describes with what kind of extravaganza Cleopatra first received Antony. Eliot has mixed imagery from Shakespeare’s play with Dido’s description in Virgil’s *Aeneid* (see below).

“Flung their smoke into the laquearia,”
Eliot refers to lines from a passage which describe how Dido entertains her royal guests (Aeneas and company). Eliot makes good use of the similarities between Shakespeare’s play and Virgil’s epic by mixing elements of descriptions from both in this opening paragraph of “A Game of Chess” (see detailed discussion below).

“As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene Sylvan scene. “

“The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king”
Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI, Philomela. [Eliot’s note] Eliot refers to the story of Philomela who was raped by Tereus, the husband of her sister Procne. All three are in the end turned into birds; Procne and Philomel into nightingales, and Tereus into a lapwing.

“So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale”
Cf. Part III, l. 195. [Eliot’s note] The reference in this note and the previous also recall the following lines from The Hollow Men: “As wind in dry grass/ Or rats’ feet over broken glass/ In our dry cellar”

“‘Jug Jug’ to dirty ears”
Conventional representation of nightingale’s song in Elizabethan poetry. (NA) The ‘dirty ears are probably Tereus’, who raped Philomel.

“I think we are in rats’ alley”
Cf. Part III, l. 204 [Eliot’s note] The reference in this note and the following also recall the following lines from The Hollow Men: “As wind in dry grass/ Or rats’ feet over broken glass/ In our dry cellar”

“The wind under the door.”
Cf. Webster: ‘Is the wind in that door still?’ [Eliot’s note] The line cited in the note is from John Webster, *The Devil’s Law Case* 3.2.162. (NA)

“Those are pearls that were his eyes”
Cf. Part I, l. 37.48. [Eliot’s note] These lines are from The Tempest again.

“O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag---“
American ragtime song, which was a hit of Ziegfeld’s Follies in 1912. (NA)

“And we shall play a game of chess,”
Cf. the game of chess in Middleton’s *Women Beware Women*. [Eliot’s note] The piece has a scene in which a mother-in-law is distracted by a game of chess while her daughter-in-law is seduced: every move in the chess game represents a move in the seduction. (NA)

“Hurry up please it’s time”
The traditional call of the British bartender at closing time. (NA)

“Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.”
Cf. the mad Ophelia’s departing words in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*:

OPHELIA: I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i’ th’ cold ground.
My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies. Good night, sweet ladies. Good night, good night.

*(Hamlet 4.5.72).*

Ophelia, too, met “death by water.” (NA)
III. THE FIRE SERMON

“Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.”
Cf. Spenser, Prothalamion. [Eliot’s note] Eliot’s line is the refrain from Spenser’s marriage song, which is also set by the Thames in London - but a very different Thames from the modern littered river (NA).

“By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept...”
Cf. Psalms 137.1, in which the exiled Hebrews mourn for their homeland: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, wept, when we remembered Zion.” (NA)

“But at my back in a cold blast I hear”
An ironic distortion of Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress”, lines 21-22: “But at my back I always hear/ Time’s wingèd chariots hurrying near. Cf. also l. 196 (NA)

“And on the king my father’s death before him”
Cf. The Tempest, I, ii. [Eliot’s note] This is one of many references to Shakespeare’s play. Again it is implied that Ferdinand is speaking these lines, and here refers to his relatives that he thinks have drowned.

“But at my back from time to time I hear”

“Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring”
‘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...’
[Eliot’s note] In the Greek myth, Actaeon was changed to a stag and hunted to death after he saw Diana, the goddess of chastity, bathing with her nymphs. (see Metamorphoses, below).

“They wash their feet in soda water”
I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia. [Eliot’s note] One of the less bawdy versions of the song, which was popular among Australian troops in World War I, went as follows:
O the moon shines bright on Mrs. Porter
And on the daughter
Of Mrs. Porter.
They wash their feet [read: genitalia] in soda water
And so they oughter
To keep them clean. (NA)

“Et O ces voix d’enfants, chantant dans la coupole!”
“And O those children’s voices singing in the dome!”

“C.i.f. London: documents at sight”
The currants were quoted at a price ‘cost insurance and freight to London’; and the Bill of Lading, etc., were to be handed to the buyer upon payment of the sight draft. [Eliot’s note]

“I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives”
Tiresias is a man from Greek mythology who for seven years changed sex, after he struck two intertwined snakes. He is known for being a seer and occurs in many classical texts. In Ovid’s Metamorphoses he is asked whether men or women experience more pleasure in sex (this is in Eliot’s note), and immediately afterwards follows the section in which he predicts the fate of Narcissus, which the episode with the typist and the “young man carbuncular” imitates (see below).
“Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,”
This may not appear as exact as Sappho’s lines, but I had in mind the ‘longshore’ or ‘dory’ fisherman, who returns at nightfall. [Eliot’s note] Sappho’s poem addressed Hesperus, the evening star, as the star that brings everyone home from work to evening rest; her poem is here distorted by Eliot. There is also an echo of Robert Louis Stevenson’s Requiem: “Home is the sailor, home from sea”. (NA)

See also La Commedia, Purgatorio VIII, 1ff.: “Era già l’ora che volgie il disio / ai navicanti. . . .”

“When lovely woman stoops to folly and”
Cf. Goldsmith, the song in The Vicar of Wakefield. [Eliot’s note] Olivia, a character in Oliver Goldsmith’s novel, sings the following song when she returns to the place where she was seduced:
When lovely woman stoops to folly
And finds too late that men betray
What charm can soothe her melancholy, What art can wash her guilt away?
The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye, To give repentance to her lover And wring his bosom – is to die.

“”This music crept by me upon the waters”’
Cf. The Tempest, as above. [Eliot’s note] Cf. line 48. The line is from Ferdinand’s speech, continuing after “weeping again the King my father’s wrack.”

“Of Magnus Martyr I hold”
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.). [Eliot’s note] In these lines, the “pleasant” music, the “fishmen” resting after labour, and the splendour of the church interior all suggest a world of true values, where work and relaxation are both real and take place in a context of religious meaning. It is but a momentary glimpse of an almost lost world.

“The river sweats”
The Song of the (three) Thames-daughters begins here. From line 292 to 306 inclusive they speak in turn. Cf. Götterdämmerung, III: i: the Rhine Daughters. [Eliot’s note] Eliot parallel’s the Thames-daughters with the Rhine-maidens in Wagner’s opera Die Götterdämmerung (“The Twilight of the Gods”) who lament that, with the gold of the Nibelungs stolen, the beauty of the river is gone. The refrain in lines 277-8 is borrowed from Wagner.

“Elizabeth and Leicester”
Cf. 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.” [Eliot’s note]

“Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew”
Cf. Purgatorio, V. 133:
“Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;
Siena mi fe’, dis fecemmi Maremma.” Italian: “Remember me, who am La Pia / Siena made me, Maremma undid me.” [Eliot’s note] Highbury: a residential London suburb; Richmond: a pleasant part of London westward up the Thames, with boating and riverside hotels. Kew: adjoining Richmond, has the famous Kew Gardens.

“To Carthage then I came”
St. Augustine’s Confessions: ‘to Carthage then I came, where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears.’ [Eliot’s note]

“Burning burning burning burning”
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. [Eliot’s note]
“O Lord Thou pluckest me out”
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. [Eliot’s note]

V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

“He who was living is now dead”
These lines, containing allusions to Christ’s imprisonment and trial, and to Gethsemane and Golgotha, suggest the hopeless days between Good Friday and Easter, between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection - associated with the death of the Fisher King.

“Where the hermit thrush sings in the pine trees”
This is Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii, the hermit-thrush which I have heard in Quebec Province. 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. [Eliot’s note]

“Who is the third who walks always beside you?”
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. [Eliot’s note]

“There is the empty chapel, only the wind’s home.”
Suggesting the moment of near despair before the Chapel Perilous, when the questing knight sees nothing there but decay. This illusion of nothingness is the knight’s final test.

“Co co rico co co rico”
The crowing of the cock signals the departure of ghosts and evil spirits. Cf. Hamlet 1.1.157ff.

“Da”
‘Dutta, dayadhvam, damyata’ (Give, sympathise, control). The fable of the meaning of the Thunder is found in the Brihadaranyaka - Upanishad, 5, I. A translation is found in Deussen’s Sechzig Upanishads des Veda, p. 489 [Eliot’s note].

“Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider”
407. Cf. Webster, The White Devil, V, vi: “...they’ll remarry/ Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs.” [Eliot’s note]

“Dayadhvam: I have heard the key”
Cf. Inferno, XXXIII, 46: “ed io senti chiavar l’uscio di sotto / all’orribile torre.” (And I heard below the door of the horrible tower being locked up.) Also F.H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 306: “My external sensations are no less private to my self 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 particular and private to that soul.” [Eliot’s note]

“Fishing, with the arid plain behind me”
Cf. Weston: From Ritual to Romance; chapter on the Fisher King. [Eliot’s note]

“Shall I at least set my lands in order?”
Cf. Isaiah 38.1: “Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.” The inclusive “I,” who sits in the symbolic act of fishing (seeking salvation, regeneration, eternity) with the Waste Land behind him, wonders how far he can order his affairs.

“London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down”
One of the later lines of this nursery rhyme is “Take the key and lock her up, my fair lady.”
“Poi s’ascose nel foco che gli affina”
“Now I pray you, by that virtue which guides you to the summit of the stairway, be mindful in due time of my pain.”
Then (in the line Eliot quotes here)
“he hid himself in the fire which refines them.”

“Quando fiam uti chelidon ---O swallow swallow”
“When shall I be as the swallow?” Cf. Pervigilium Veneris. Cf. Philomela in Parts II and III. [Eliot’s note] Pervigilium

Veneris (Vigil of Venus) is an anonymous late Latin poem combining a hymn to Venus with a description of spring. In the last two stanzas of the Pervigilium occurs a recollection of the Tereus-Procne-Philomela myth (except that in this version the swallow is identified with Philomela): “The maid of Tereus sings under the poplar shade ... She sings, we are silent. When will my spring come? When shall I be as the swallow that I may cease to be silent? I have lost the Muse in silence, and Apollo regards me not.”

Le Prince d’Aquitaine a la tour abolie
“The prince of Aquitaine at the destroyed tower.”

“These fragments I have shored against my ruins”
This may refer to the whole poem - fragments assembled by the speaker in the attempt to come to terms with his situation. (NA)

“Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo’s mad againe”
Cf. Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy. [Eliot’s note] Subtitled “Hieronymo’s Mad Againe,” Kyd’s play (1594) is an early example of the Elizabethan tragedy of revenge. Hieronymo, driven mad by the murder of his son, has his revenge when he is asked to write a court entertainment. He replies, “Why then Ile fit you!” (i.e. accommodate you), and assigns the parts of the entertainment so that, in the course of the action, his son’s murderers are killed. (NA)

“Shantih shantih shantih.”
Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. ‘The Peace which passeth understanding’ is our equivalent to this word. [Eliot’s note]
6. T.S. ELIOT’S NOTES TO THE WASTE LAND

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston’s book on the Grail legend: From Ritual to Romance (Macmillan). 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 recognize in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies.

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD


31. V. Tristan und Isolde, i, verses 5–8.

42. Id. iii, verse 24.

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

60. Cf. Baudelaire:
   Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,
   Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.

63. Cf. Inferno, iii. 55–7:
   si lunga tratta
   di gente, ch’io non avrei mai
   creduto che morte tanta n’avesse
disfatta.

64. Cf. Inferno, iv. 25–27:
   Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,
   non avea pianto, ma’ che di
   sospiro, che l’aura eterna facevan
tremare.

68. A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

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

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

II. A GAME OF CHESS

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

92. Laquearia. V. Aeneid, I. 726:
dependent lynchi laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt.

98. Sylvan scene. V. Milton, Paradise Lost, iv. 140.

99. V. Ovid, Metamorphoses, vi, Philomela.
100. Cf. Part III, l. 204.


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


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

III. THE FIRE SERMON

176. V. Spenser, Prothalamion.

192. Cf. The Tempest, I. ii.

196. Cf. Marvell, To His Coy Mistress.

197. Cf. Day, Parliament of Bees:
   When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear,
   A noise of horns and hunting, which shall
   bring Actaeon to Diana in the spring,
   Where all shall see her naked skin...

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

202. V. Verlaine, Parsifal.

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

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

   ...Cum 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 potencia plagae’,
   Dixit ‘ut auctoris sortem in contraria mutet,
   Nunc quoque vos feriam!’ percussis anguibus
   isdem Forma prior redit genetivaque venit imago.
   Arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosia
   Dicta Iovis firmat; gravius Saturnia iusto
   Nec pro materia fertur doluisse suide
   Iudicis aeterna damnavit lumina nocte,
   At pater omnipotens (neque enim licet inrita
   cuiquam Facta dei fecisse deo) pro lumine adempto
   Scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore.
221. This may not appear as exact as Sappho’s lines, but I had in mind the ‘longshore’ or ‘dory’ fisherman, who returns at nightfall.

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

257. V. The Tempest, as above.

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

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

279. V. Froude, Elizabeth, vol. I, ch. iv, letter of De Quadra to Philip of Spain:
In the afternoon we were in a barge, watching the games on the river. (The queen) was alone with Lord Robert and myself on the poop, when they began to talk nonsense, and went so far that Lord Robert at last said, as I was on the spot there was no reason why they should not be married if the queen pleased.

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

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

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

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

**V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID**

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

357. This is Turdus aonalaschkae 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.

360. The following lines were stimulated by the account of one of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton’s): it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was one more member than could actually be counted.

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

401. ‘Datta, dayadhvam, damayata’ (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.

407. Cf. Webster, The White Devil, V. vi:
...they’ll remarry
Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider
Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs.
411. Cf. Inferno, xxxiii. 46:
   ed io sentii chiavar’l’uscio di sotto
   all’orribile torre.
   Also F. H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 346: “My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it.... In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.”

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

427. V. Purgatorio, xxvi. 148.
   ‘Ara vos prec per aquella valor
   ‘que vos guida al som de l’escalina,
   ‘sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor.’
   Poi s’ascose nel foco che gli affina.

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

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

431. V. Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy.

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

END OF ELIOT’S NOTES
When April with its showers sweet
Has pierced the drought of March down to the root
And bathèd every stem with watery power
From which engendered is the flower—

When Zephyrus, too, with his sweet breath has blown
Through all the woods and fields,
Inspiring tender shoots—and the month’s young sun,
Has run half its course through the sign of the Ram,
And little birds that sleep all night with open eye,
Their hearts pricked by nature, make sweet melody—

Then people long to go on pilgrimages
Carrying palm branches to foreign strands
To distant shrines renowned in various lands;
And specially, from every shire’s end
In England, they to Canterbury wend:
The holy blessèd martyr there to seek,
The one who helped once when they were sick.