The Waste Land

"NAM Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω."[1]

For Ezra Pound
il miglior fabbro.[2]

1. "For I once saw with my own eyes the Cumean Sibyl hanging in a jar, and when the boys asked her, 'Sibyl, what do you want?' she answered, 'I want to die' " (Greek). Quoted from the *Satyricon* of Petronius Arbiter, a noted libertine of the first century C.E. It is one of many empty boasts and tall stories delivered at the banquet of Trimalchio, a freedman. The Sibyl, one of a number of prophetic figures so named in ancient times, is confined to a jar because her body threatens to deliquesce. Granted a wish by Apollo, she had asked for as many years of life as there are grains in a handful of sand, but she forgot to ask for eternal youth as well.
2. "The better craftsman" (Italian). Eliot's tribute to friend and fellow poet Ezra Pound (1885–1972), whose poetic craftsmanship was invaluable in editing the *Waste Land* manuscript. The phrase echoes the tribute offered by Dante Alighieri to twelfth-century Provençal poet Arnaut Daniel in Canto 26 of Dante's *Purgatorio*, a section from which Eliot also borrows l. 427.

I. The Burial of the Dead[3]

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[4]
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.[5]
And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.[6]
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,[7]
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,[8]
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

3. The title given to the burial service in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.
4. A lake near Munich, Germany; the Hofgarten (l. 10) is a park in the same city.
5. "I'm not Russian at all; I come from Lithuania, a true German" (German).
6. According to Valerie Eliot's notes to the published manuscript of *The Waste Land*, Eliot based this sledding incident on a conversation he had with the Countess Marie Larisch, who published her reminiscences of the Austrian nobility in *My Past* (1913).
7. In his own note, Eliot cites Ezekiel 2.1: "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee." Thereafter, God addresses the prophet by this phrase: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel" (3.17).
8. Eliot cites Ecclesiastes 12.5: "Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." The chapter is devoted to the sorrow of old age and decline, when it is discovered that "all is vanity" (12.8).

Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;[9]
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du?[1]

"You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
"They called me the hyacinth girl."
—Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth[2] garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
Oed' und leer das Meer.[3]

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,[4]
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards.[5] Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)[6]
Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,[7]

9. Lines 26–29 were salvaged from "The Death of St. Narcissus," which was completed as of 1915 but was never published. Two draft versions of the poem were included with the *Waste Land* manuscript materials.
1. "Fresh blows the wind / To the homeland / My Irish child / Where do you wait?" (German). The first of two quotations from Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (first performed in 1865). This one, which occurs at the beginning of the opera, is part of a song overheard by Isolde, who is being taken by Tristan to Ireland, where she is to marry King Mark. The original story, put into German verse in the middle ages by Gottfried von Strassburg (Wagner's source), gradually became part of Arthurian literature and thus came to be associated with the Grail legend Eliot refers to elsewhere in the poem.
2. The flower now referred to by this name is not the one so named by the Greeks, who saw the letters "AI," spelling out a cry of woe, in its petals. The story told about this flower makes it a memorial to a young man loved and accidentally killed by Apollo.
3. "Desolate and empty is the sea" (German). The second quotation from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. This one, taken from the third act of the opera, occurs as the dying Tristan waits for news of Isolde, arriving by sea.
4. The name is taken from Aldous Huxley's novel *Crome Yellow* (1921). See pp. 40–42.
5. As Eliot's own note slyly admits, this passage has only a very loose connection with the Tarot pack used by fortune tellers to probe the past and predict the future. But there is a discussion of the Tarot in Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*, which connects the pack to the Grail legend and fertility rituals. See "[The Tarot Pack]," pp. 37–38.
6. One of a number of borrowings from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, 1.3. This line is from the song the spirit Ariel sings to Ferdinand of his father's supposed drowning. See also l. 125.
7. The literal meaning of the name is "beautiful lady." She is frequently associated by commentators with Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks* and with his *Mona Lisa*, who is famously described in Walter Pater's *The Renaissance* (1893) as "older than the rocks among which she sits." There is no such card in the Tarot pack.

The lady of situations.
Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,[8]
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,[9]
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.[1]
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth[2] 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![3]
"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,[4]
"Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
"You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!"[5]

8. The man with the three staves and the wheel are authentic Tarot cards, but the one-eyed merchant is a mystery of Eliot's own devising.
9. As Eliot notes, this is his adaptation of Charles Baudelaire's "Fourmillante cité" from his poem "Le sept vieillards" (in *Les Fleurs du Mal*, 1857). See "The Seven Old Men," pp. 43–45.
1. In his notes, Eliot refers the reader to two passages from Dante's *Inferno*. The first is from Canto 3, which takes place just inside the Gates of Hell, in a vestibule to which are consigned those who are equally without blame and without praise. Looking at this great company, Dante delivers the exclamation Eliot translates in l. 63. The next line is taken from Canto 4, in which Dante descends into the first circle of Hell, or Limbo, where those who died without baptism languish, sighing impotently, for there is nothing that can be done about their condition.
2. A church at the corner of Lombard and King William streets in the City (or financial district) of London. The last part of its name refers to Wulfnoth, who may have founded the medieval church that was demolished in the eighteenth century and completely rebuilt by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Bank Station nearby was a frequent stop on Eliot's commute to work.
3. A battle (206 B.C.E.) in the First Punic War between Rome and Carthage.
4. Eliot's adaptation of some lines from a dirge in John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612), sung by Cornelia as she prepares her son's body for burial. See "[Cornelia's Dirge]," p. 45.
5. "Hypocrite reader!—my likeness,—my brother!" (French). Eliot's version of the final line of Baudelaire's "Au Lecteur," the introductory poem in *Les Fleurs du Mal*. See "To the Reader," pp. 42–43.

II. A Game of Chess[6]

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,[7]
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,[8]
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[9]
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced;[1] yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
"Jug Jug"[2] to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls; staring forms

6. Eliot takes the title of this section from a satirical play of the same name by Thomas Middleton (1570?–1627). First produced in 1625, *A Game of Chess* was suppressed because of the biting way in which it allegorized English conflict with Spain as a chess match. The title also alludes to Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (published in 1657), in which a young wife is seduced while her unwitting mother-in-law plays chess.
7. In his own note, Eliot cites Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.2.190. In this passage, Enobarbus describes to Agrippa how Cleopatra looked on her first meeting with Mark Antony: "The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne, / Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold. . . ."
8. The panels of a coffered ceiling. In his note, Eliot cites a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid*: "Burning torches hang from the gold-panelled ceiling, / And vanquish the night with their flames" (Latin).
9. Eliot cites a passage from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, in which Satan, approaching Eden, sees it as a "delicious Paradise" and a "Sylvan Scene" overgrown with trees and bushes.
1. Eliot refers in his note to the story of Tereus and Philomela as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. See "[The Story of Tereus and Philomela]," pp. 46–50.
2. Conventional literary onomatopoeia for the sound a nightingale supposedly makes.

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' 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.[3]
"Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?"
But
O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag[4]—
It's so elegant
So intelligent

"What shall I do now? What shall I do?
"I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
"With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
"What shall we ever do?"
The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil's husband got demobbed,[5] I said—
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,

3. A reference to the line from Ariel's song in *The Tempest* quoted above, l. 48.
4. Eliot's syncopated version of a popular song, published in 1912, with lyrics by Gene Buck and Herman Ruby and music by Dave Stamper. See "That Shakespearian Rag," pp. 51–54.
5. Demobilized, or released from the armed services after World War I. According to Valerie Eliot's notes to the *Waste Land* manuscript, this final passage was based on gossip recounted to the Eliots by Ellen Kellond, their maid.

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME[6]
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 ITS 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[7] said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
You *are* a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children?
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,[8]
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.[9]

6. Closing time, as announced at a pub.
7. Pharmacist.
8. Ham.
9. In *Hamlet*, 4.5.71–72, the mad Ophelia's parting words to Queen Gertrude and King Claudius, before her death.

III. The Fire Sermon[1]

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.[2]
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[3] . . .
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[4]
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.[5]
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

1. The title of this section is taken from a sermon preached by Buddha against the things of this world, all figured as consuming fires. See "The Fire-Sermon," pp. 54–55.
2. The refrain from Edmund Spenser's "Prothalamion" (1596). See "*From* Prothalamion," pp. 55–56.
3. An adaptation of Psalm 137, which begins, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." In the original, the people of Israel, in Babylonian exile, remember the city of Jerusalem. Eliot substitutes "Leman," the French name for Lake Geneva, where he spent several weeks in 1921 on a rest-cure, while working on *The Waste Land*.
4. The first of two references to Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress," first published in 1681, three years after the poet's death. Eliot adapts the lines, "But at my back I always hear / Time's winged chariot hurrying near," with which the speaker turns from his leisurely catalog of his lady's physical charms to the urgent carpe diem theme that has made the poem famous. See also l. 196.
5. Another reference to *The Tempest*, 1.2. Just before hearing Ariel's song (see l. 48), Ferdinand describes himself as "Sitting on a bank, / Weeping again the King my father's wrack."

Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.[6]
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole![7]

Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely forc'd.
Tereu[8]

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna[9] merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic[1] French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel[2]
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.[3]

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting,

6. Eliot apparently had in mind for these lines an elaborate parallel to a story told in, among other places, the allegorical masque *The Parliament of Bees* (1607), by John Day (1574–1640), which is cited in his notes. Sweeney, who seems from his actions in other of Eliot's poems ("Sweeney Erect" and "Sweeney Among the Nightingales") to have been his idea of an urban lout, approaches Mrs. Porter as Actaeon approaches Diana in the story referred to by Day. Actaeon surprises Diana (goddess of chastity as well as the hunt) while she is bathing, is turned into a stag by her, and is subsequently hunted to death by his own hounds.
7. The last line of French poet Paul Verlaine's sonnet "Parsifal," which first appeared in 1886 and was subsequently included in *Amour* (1888). In the original the line reads, "—Et, ô ces voix d'enfants chantant dans la coupole!" It can be translated as "And oh those children's voices singing in the dome!" In Verlaine's poem, Parsifal resists the temptations of female flesh, vanquishes Hell, restores the ailing king, and kneels to adore the Holy Grail, having become its priest. In general, the sonnet paraphrases its source, Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal* (1877), in which Parsifal resists the wiles of Kundry, seizes the spear that had originally wounded King Amfortas, and heals him with it. The line Eliot quotes refers to the end of the opera, in which the dome of the Grail Castle fills with unearthly voices as Parsifal unwraps and raises the Grail. Many commentators have noticed as well that in the opera (though not in Verlaine's poem) Parsifal receives a ritual footbath before his final approach to the Grail Castle.
8. Noises made by the protagonists in the story of Tereus and Philomela, all of whom were turned into birds. "Tereu" is the vocative form of the name of Tereus, indicating that he is being addressed. In at least one Elizabethan source, *Alexander and Campaspe* (attributed to John Lyly), the ravished Philomela, turned into a nightingale, accuses Tereus in her song: "Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu!" See "The Story of Tereus and Philomela," pp. 46–50.
9. A city in Anatolia, now the Turkish city of Izmir. After World War I, Smyrna was the focus of a calamitous war between Greece and Turkey, which was much in the news while Eliot composed his poem. Greece's loss of Smyrna resulted in a military coup in that country, while Britain's role became a factor in the fall of the Lloyd George government in 1922.
1. Colloquial (of the people), as opposed to scholarly.
2. A commercial hotel in the City of London.
3. A fashionable hotel in Brighton, a popular resort.

I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,[4]
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,[5]
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[6] 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,[7] 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.[8]
The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
Exploring hands encounter no defence;
His vanity requires no response,
And makes a welcome of indifference.
(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
Enacted on this same divan or bed;
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)[9]
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[1] and

4. Tiresias, who had once been turned into a woman and thus had lived "two lives," was blinded in a dispute between Juno and Jove. For the story, see "[The Blinding of Tiresias]," p. 46.
5. In his notes, Eliot refers to a poem by Sappho (Fragment 149), a prayer to the Evening Star.
6. One-piece undergarments.
7. A carbuncle is an infected boil.
8. Bradford is a manufacturing town in the north of England. A millionaire from that town would have made his money in trade or manufacturing. Hence, nouveau riche.
9. Ll. 245–46 draw on other classical references to the story of Tiresias, particularly his role (as a Theban seer) in *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles (496–406 B.C.E.), and in Homer's *Odyssey*, where he appears in the underworld to advise Odysseus.
1. In his notes, Eliot refers to Oliver Goldsmith's novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1762). See "[Olivia's Song]," p. 57.

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

"This music crept by me upon the waters"[2]
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.[3]
O City, City, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,[4]
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[5] hold
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

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[6]
Past the Isle of Dogs.
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala[7]
Elizabeth and Leicester[8]
Beating oars
The stern was formed
A gilded shell
Red and gold
The brisk swell

2. As Eliot points out in his notes, another reference to Ariel's Song in *The Tempest*. See also ll. 48 and 125.
3. Streets in the City of London, running more or less parallel to the Thames.
4. A street in the City of London, running parallel to the Thames near London Bridge. The Church of St. Magnus Martyr is on Lower Thames Street.
5. A church on this site, dedicated to the Norse martyr St. Magnus, is mentioned as far back as William the Conqueror. Rebuilt after the Great Fire by the English architect Sir Christopher Wren (1671–1676), the present church is on Lower Thames Street at the foot of London Bridge, in a district traditionally associated with fishmongers. The columns dividing the nave from the side aisles are Ionic.
6. The Thames River at Greenwich, downstream from London. The Isle of Dogs is the name given to the riverbank opposite Greenwich.
7. The lament of the Rhine-maidens in Richard Wagner's *Die Götterdämmerung*, the last of the four operas that comprise *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (first performed as a whole in 1876). In *Das Rheingold*, the first opera in the series, the maidens lose the gold deposited in their river. It is this gold, forged into a ring, that sets in motion the events of the four operas.
8. Eliot's note quotes a passage from James Anthony Froude's *History of England*. For the context, see "[Elizabeth and Leicester]," pp. 57–58.

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 Kew[9]
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe."

"My feet are at Moorgate,[1] 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.[2]
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[3]

Burning burning burning burning[4]
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

9. Eliot's note suggests a parallel between this scene and a passage in Canto 5 of Dante's *Purgatorio*, in which he is addressed in turn by three spirits, the last of whom identifies herself as La Pia, born in Siena and murdered by her husband in Maremma. The formula is common in epitaphs, as, for example, in Virgil's as given by Suetonius: "Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere" (Mantua gave me light; Calabria slew me [Latin]). But Eliot adapts it in this case to a seduction; Highbury is the London suburb in which the victim was born, Richmond and Kew two riverside districts west of London where her virtue was "undone."
1. An area in east London.
2. Eliot spent three weeks in October 1921 at the Albemarle Hotel, Cliftonville, Margate, a seaside resort in the Thames estuary. This was the first part of a three-month rest-cure during which he composed the bulk of *The Waste Land*. His hotel bill has survived, attached to the manuscript of "The Fire Sermon."
3. Eliot's notes refer to a passage in Augustine's *Confessions* in which he describes the sensual temptations of his youth. For the context of the passage, see "From *Confessions*," p. 58.
4. Eliot's drastic redaction from Buddha's Fire Sermon. For the text to which he refers in his notes, see "The Fire-Sermon," pp. 54–55.

IV. Death by Water[5]

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

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[6]
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

5. The exact significance of this section, which Pound insisted was "an integral part of the poem," has always been very difficult to determine, especially since it is, as Pound well knew, a close translation of the ending of "Dans le Restaurant," written by Eliot in 1918, before anything existed of the other four parts of *The Waste Land*.
6. Eliot's headnote to this section helps us to see these lines as a description of the betrayal, arrest, interrogation, and crucifixion of Christ, with the earthquake that follows in Matthew 27.

But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mudcracked houses
If there were water
And no rock
If there were rock
And also water
And water
A spring
A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?[7]
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?

What is that sound high in the air[8]
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

7. According to Eliot's note, he has adapted this passage from an episode in Sir Ernest Shackleton's *South* in which three Antarctic explorers fancy that there is a fourth man with them. The passage also bears a strong resemblance to the story told in Luke 24 of the two men on the road to Emmaus who do not recognize the risen Christ. See "[The Road to Emmaus]," pp. 59–60, and "[The Extra Man]," p. 60.
8. As a source for the next ten lines, Eliot cites in his notes German author Herman Hesse's *Blick ins Chaos* (1922), translated, at Eliot's urging, as *In Sight of Chaos*. For a translation of the excerpt quoted in Eliot's note and the relevant context, see "[The Downfall of Europe]," pp. 60–62.

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.[9]
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[1] was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.[2]
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
Then spoke the thunder
DA
Datta: what have we given?[3]
My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract[4]

9. According to the headnote to this section, Eliot has in mind the Chapel Perilous as described in Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. See "[The Perilous Chapel]," pp. 38–39.
1. The Ganges, sacred river of India. Ganga is a colloquial version of its name.
2. More commonly Himavat or Himavan. Sanskrit adjective meaning snowy, usually applied to the mountains known as the Himalayas, especially when personified as the father of the Ganges, among other deities.
3. As Eliot reveals in his notes, this part of the poem is based on a section of the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* in which God presents three sets of disciples with the enigmatic syllable DA, challenging each group to understand it. Each group is supposed to understand the syllable as the root of a different imperative: "damyata" (control) for the gods, who are naturally unruly; "datta" (give) to men, who are avaricious; "dayadhvam" (compassion) to the demons, who are cruel. For the full passage, see "The Three Great Disciplines," pp. 62–63.
4. Behind this line lies the lament of Francesca da Rimini, whom Dante encounters in the second circle of Hell, where she is being punished eternally for having committed adultery with her brother-in-law Paolo Malatesta. As she tells the story in Canto 5 of the *Inferno*, the two fell in love while reading a romance about Lancelot: "ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse" (but one moment alone it was that overcame us [Italian]).

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[5]
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms
DA
Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only[6]
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus[7]
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[8]
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?[9]

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down[1]
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina[2]
Quando fiam uti chelidon[3]—O swallow swallow

5. As Eliot says in his notes, he found the model for this love-denying spider in John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612).
6. According to Eliot's note, these lines combine two references. The first is to the story of Count Ugolino, whom Dante encounters in Canto 33 of the *Inferno*. Accused of treason, the count was shut up in a tower, where he starved to death. The second reference is to the philosophy of F. H. Bradley, on whom Eliot had written his doctoral thesis, which insists on and then tries to overcome the radical privacy of all experience.
7. Another image of isolation. Coriolanus was a Roman war hero who defied public opinion and ended his life leading a foreign army against Rome. He is the subject of a play by Shakespeare (1607–08) and of a poem by Eliot, "Coriolan" (1931).
8. In his notes, Eliot refers the reader to Chapter 9 of Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. For an excerpt, see "The Fisher King," p. 38.
9. The prophet Isaiah challenges King Hezekiah: "Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live" (Isaiah 38.1).
1. A children's nursery rhyme, made somewhat more pertinent by the fact that most of the London place-names in *The Waste Land* are in the vicinity of London Bridge.
2. "Then he hid himself in the fire that refines them" (Italian). This is the last line of Canto 26 of Dante's *Purgatorio*, in which Dante meets the poet Arnaut Daniel, who warns him in his own language, "Sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor" (In due time be heedful of my pain [Provençal]). This was a passage of extraordinary importance to Eliot, as evidenced by the fact that he borrowed the term applied to Daniel, "miglior fabbro," for his dedicatory line to Ezra Pound. *Ara Vos Prec*, a book of poems Eliot published in 1920, takes its title from an earlier line in the same passage, to which he returned again in his 1929 essay on Dante.
3. "When shall I be like the swallow?" (Latin). A line from the anonymous poem *Pervigilium Veneris*, which ends with a reference to the Philomela story Eliot had already used elsewhere in *The Waste Land*. For the context, see pp. 63–64.

Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie[4]
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.[5]
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih

4. "The Prince of Aquitaine of the ruined tower" (French). The second line of "El Desdichado" (The Dispossessed) (1854), a sonnet by Gerard de Nerval (1808–1855).
5. Eliot's note refers to Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedie* (1592), the subtitle of which is *Hieronymo is Mad Againe*. In Act 4 of the play, Hieronymo, driven mad by the murder of his son, stages a play in which he convinces the murderers to act a part. In the course of the play, Heironymo actually kills the murderers and then himself. For the scene in Act 4 in which Hieronymo convinces his adversaries to take part, see "From *The Spanish Tragedie*," pp. 64–66.