

# What Was Modernism?

## Lecture 12: T.S. Eliot

- 1) T.S. Eliot and the Poetics of Modernism
- 2) High Modernist Eliot

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### 1) T.S. Eliot and the Poetics of Modernism

**T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)**

**Criticism:**

“Reflections on *Vers Libre*” (1917)  
*The Sacred Wood* (1920, 2nd ed. 1928), including  
“Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) → ‘impersonality’  
“Hamlet and His Problems” (1919) → ‘objective correlative’  
“The Metaphysical Poets” (1921) → ‘dissociation of sensibility’

*Selected Essays* (1932, enlarged ed. 1951)  
*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933)  
*After Strange Gods* (1934)  
*The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939)  
*Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1949)  
*On Poetry and Poets* (1957)  
*To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (1965)

### “Reflections on *Vers Libre*” (1917)

[...] *Vers libre* does not exist [...] [It] has not even the excuse of a polemic; it is a battle cry of a freedom, and there is no freedom in art [...] [T]he ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras of even the ‘freest’ verse [...] freedom is only true freedom when it appears against the background of artificial limitation [...] [S]ome artificial limitation is necessary except in moments of first intensity [...] [T]he decay of intricate formal patterns has nothing to do with the advent of *vers libre*. It had set in long before. Only in a closely-knit and homogeneous society, where many men are at work on the same problems [...] will the development of such forms ever be carried to perfection.

And as for *vers libre* we conclude that it is not defined by absence of pattern or absence of rhyme, for other verse is without these; that it is not defined by absence of meter, since even the *worst* verse can be scanned; and we conclude that the division between Conservative Verse and *Vers libre* does not exist, for there is only good verse, bad verse, and chaos.

### “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919)

[...] No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. [...]

What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality [...] It is in this depersonalisation that art may be said to approach the condition of science. [...]

I have tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggest the conception of poetry as a living whole of all poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this Impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. And I hinted [...] that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of ‘personality’, not being necessarily more interesting, or having more to say, but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.

The analogy was that of the catalyst. When [...] two gases [...] are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected: has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

experience/passions → “*significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet”

### “Hamlet and His Problems” (1919)

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding and ‘objective correlative’; in other words, *a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events* which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.

### “The Metaphysical Poets” (1921)

[...] The difference [between the metaphysical poets and 19th century poets] is not a simple difference of degree between poets. It is something which had happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought for Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet’s mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man’s experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary [...] in the mind of the poet these [disparate] experiences are always forming new wholes.

We may express the difference by the following theory: The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic, as their predecessors were [...] In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden. Each of these men performed certain poetic functions so magnificently well that the magnitude of the effect concealed the absence of others. [...]

[The metaphysical poets] were, at best, engaged in the task of trying to find the verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling. And this means both that they were more mature, and that they wear better, than later poets of certainly no less literary ability.

[...] [I]t appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning [...] Hence we get something which looks very much like the conceit – we get, in fact, a method curiously similar to that of the ‘metaphysical poets’, similar also in its use of obscure words and of simple phrasing. [...] May we not conclude, then, that [the metaphysical poets] are in the direct current of English poetry [...]

## 2) High Modernist Eliot

### Poetical Works:

*Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917)  
*Ara Vos Prec* (1920)  
*The Waste Land* (1922)  
*Poems, 1909-1925* (1925)  
*Ash-Wednesday* (1930)  
*Collected Poems, 1909-1935* (1936)  
*Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939)  
*Four Quartets* (1943)  
*Collected Poems, 1909-1962* (1963)  
[+ verse drama]

### The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S'io credesse chc mia risposta fosse  
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,  
Questa Gamma staria senza piu scosse.  
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo  
Non torno viva alcun, s'i'odo il vero,  
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table;  
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:  
Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question....  
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"  
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,

Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time  
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,  
Rubbing its back upon the window panes;  
There will be time, there will be time  
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet  
There will be time to murder and create,  
And time for all the works and days of hands  
That lift and drop a question on your plate;  
Time for you and time for me,  
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time  
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"  
Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair--  
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")  
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,  
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin--  
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")  
Do I dare  
Disturb the universe?  
In a minute there is time  
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;  
I know the voices dying with a dying fall  
Beneath the music from a farther room.

So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all--  
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,  
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,  
Then how should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?  
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all--  
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare  
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)  
Is it perfume from a dress  
That makes me so digress?  
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.  
And should I then presume?  
And how should I begin?

. . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets  
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes  
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?  
I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!  
Smoothed by long fingers,  
Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers.  
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.  
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,  
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?  
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,  
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)  
brought in upon a platter,  
I am no prophet--and here's no great matter;  
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,  
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,  
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,  
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,  
Would it have been worth while,  
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,  
To have squeezed the universe into a ball  
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,  
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,  
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"--  
If one, settling a pillow by her head,  
Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;  
That is not it, at all."  
And would it have been worth it, after all,  
Would it have been worth while,  
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,

After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts  
that trail along the floor--  
And this, and so much more?--  
It is impossible to say just what I mean!  
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a  
screen:  
Would it have been worth while  
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,  
And turning toward the window, should say:  
"That is not it at all,  
That is not what I meant, at all."

. . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant lord, one that will do  
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,  
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,  
Deferential, glad to be of use,  
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;  
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;  
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous--  
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old ... I grow old ...  
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?  
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.  
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves  
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back  
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea  
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown  
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

## The Waste Land (excerpts)

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

For Ezra Pound  
*il miglior fabbro*

### I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.  
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee  
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,  
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.  
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.  
And when we were children, staying at the 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.  
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,  
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.  
[...]

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,  
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.  
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,  
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours  
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.  
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying 'Stetson!  
'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!  
'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,  
'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?  
'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?  
'Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,  
'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!  
'You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!'

## II. A GAME OF CHESS

[...]

'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.

[...]

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

[...]

### 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 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!*

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

### Unreal City

[...]

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 foresuffered all  
Enacted on this same divan or bed;  
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall  
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)  
Bestows 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.  
[...]

'On Margate Sands  
I can connect  
Nothing with nothing  
[...]

#### 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

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

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 drop drop drop  
But there is no water

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?

[...]  
What is the city over the mountains  
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air  
Falling towers  
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria  
Vienna London  
Unreal

[...]  
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

[...]  
Then spoke the thunder  
DA  
*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

DA

*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

DA

*Damyata*: The boat responded  
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar  
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded  
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient  
To controlling hands

I sat upon the shore  
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
Shall I at least set my lands in order?  
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down  
[...]  
These fragments I have shored against my ruins  
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.  
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.  
Shantih shantih shantih

## Form?

- original title: 'He Do the Police in Different Voices'  
(Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*)
- collage of voices and quotations which has to be deciphered on the basis of the implied readers' encyclopedic knowledge of cultural history or with the help of annotations (cf., for example, the critical editions of *The Waste Land* or, more generally, B.C. Southam, *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot*. London/Boston: Faber&Faber, 1968...).

## Intertextuality:

James G. Frazer, Jessie L. Weston, Aldous Huxley, Charles Baudelaire, John Webster, Ovid, Gene Buck and Herman Ruby (That Shakespearian Rag) plus more popular culture sources of the day, Gotama Buddha, Edmund Spenser, Oliver Goldsmith, James Anthony Froude, St. Augustine, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Kyd und William Shakespeare, and last but certainly not least *The King James Bible*, *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, und *Pervigilium Veneris*.

## Text?

Various incarnations:

a) original first editions 1922

- the poem without Eliot's notes in *The Criterion* (GB) and *The Dial* (US)
- the poem with Eliot's notes published as a book (Boni and Livewright)

b) the poem as part of the *Collected Poems* (1963ff.) with Eliot's notes

c) critical editions (North 2001, Rainey 2005) running up to between 250 and 300 pages

d) Facsimile-edition of the manuscripts including the legendary extensive cuts by Ezra Pound (ed. by Valerie Eliot 1971).

- *The Waste Land* provides a fabric of voices and earlier texts which gets in the way of the readers' attempts to read 'through' the text for the reality 'behind' it or for a 'transcendental signified' in the traditional hermeneutical sense
- various readings of *The Waste Land* have established a variety of dominant meanings: the decline and downfall of the West/of Europe, Eliot's personal crisis (in both cultural and private terms), the organisation of the text itself (intertextuality, intermediality, interculturality, ambiguity, ...)
- not only the 'content', but also the texture of the *The Waste Land* is representative of the 'Textual Condition' (Jerome McGann) of the modern age (cf. Reinfandt 2011)

## The Hollow Men

*A Penny for the Old Guy*

I

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us -- if at all -- not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men.

II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
In death's dream kingdom  
These do not appear:  
There, the eyes are  
Sunlight on a broken column  
There, is a tree swinging  
And voices are  
In the wind's singing  
More distant and more solemn  
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer --

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

III

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.



Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.

IV

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose  
Of death's twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men.

V

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow

*Life is very long*

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

For Thine is  
Life is  
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

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