

# The Waste Land

1922

T.S. Eliot

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

For Ezra Pound  
*il miglior fabbro.*

## I. The Burial of the Dead

April is the cruelest 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. 12  
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. 18  
What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, 20  
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, 23  
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. 30

...

...

## Unreal City, 60

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. 63  
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, 64  
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. 68  
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: 'Stetson! 69  
'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?  
'O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men, 74  
'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!  
'You! Hypocrite lecteur! - mon semblable, - mon frère!' 76