

I read The Wasteland,
“Shanti, Shanti, Shanti,”
Or should I say,
“It read me.”?

Cars passing, stopped, on the Pike
Radio lines, repeated in time

Mountains yielding no water,
When all resources fail,
We will dig again, dragging
Water from stone in evaporated
Frenzy.

Thomas the Phoenician, two hours dead,
Forgot even the sound of the robins on lampposts
Whose light, just extinguished from the pre-programed
Switchboard, was forgotten ages ago by city planners,
As mile markers picked life from his bones
In faint whispers, he recalled only profit and
Loss in the slow loosening of his limbs,
An Armageddon in small doses, as it always
Was, yay, it always will be, no flash of light
Or white horses, but only the show of
Unseen losses, and celebrations of foreseeable
Feats whose treats pass for Saturday feasts and
Sunday melancholy, alone in the same chair
As the last, this, the grand apocalypse,
Devils picking at carcasses, spears and blood,
Angels forgoing moments of saving grace for
The unwashed, rather, no one can clean the
Road’s black ash from their feet, they sit,
Staring, never noticing those who pass along
The other side, reversing their woes,
Separateness is drivers alone,

Loneliness is the BBC, knowing that all the news
America has to sell has been your
Service, twice, and still it goes on,
And still the job waits for you,
Once the work is done.

But why wear your shoes with no clothes?
“It's one less thing to carry.”

Logic, mythoLogic, the Greek god
Of moonlight said, while walking
Among mortals, that all is as one
Chooses to believe, that, choice, even,
As she gouged out the eyes of a passing
Sailor who stared at her skirts too long,
“Is the product of your belief.” Her lover
Would later turn the sailor into
Sea foam so that he could forever
Look up the skirts of anyone he chose to.
“And why play a guitar with five strings?”
The A has other uses, as an article, or
Popularity. The one thing, after all,
That the rise and fall of billions upon
Trillions of lives has proven is that
All will right itself, and the right will
Never look the same as before, and
Few will find meaning, or cause, but
Something must be written down for
Children to read and pundits to argue
Over to show that they are worthy
Of campaign donations, earlier and
Earlier each year.

Remember the words of the Lord,
They will keep you in all things,
As a light that gives you away
To all who would kill you savagely,
And drink your blood, or to those
Who would ask you into their fold.

And so what of it, Death?
Progenitor of art,
The fertile soil from which
Leaves, extended from ash,
Seek the narrow light of moments,
Time's newlywed, ever escaping

Love's finger, diamonds lingering
In long-willed shadow, crushed
By fire and rock, bereft of water,
Sunlight's tickling hand reaching
Across lands golden with life,
Memory's Tiresias, argument's strife,
All but the lost stand before
You and wave their fist,
Listing side to side to avoid
Centered, you, Death, fondling the
Alien scythe, bringing pestilence for
Posterity, wandering across TV
Screens between cars and furniture,
Sitting atop cathedrals of progress
And yearning for a call, not to arms,
But to legs, movement, the studied
Course of barriers that, once lain down,
Are centuries in the forgetting, but easily
Discarded.

What do we call life if not the smooth
Ferry boat to nowhere, that is, nowhere
But the end that marks the beginning
With, never the other way around, standing
Aside and leaving others to wonder,
Vanity the denial of riches, mothers, and art,
Strung upon tin-can phone lines, scratching
Messages to yesterday lost in translation,
The mailman, the priest, the child, and the rest,
It is but the soldier who, worm in hand, sinks
Her way past the dark lines of morbidity and into
The padded-wall ward, singing to all her
Hero's welcome for the one who gave them up,
The teacher, the bank teller, the out-of-work,
"brother-can-you-spare-a-dime" footman
Punching the clock like a tower, hour after
God damned hour to the tune of "go do it
Yourself, and leave me alone", grasping
After "Mine!" they wreath and spindle
The world into dwindling pants suits
For the fattening age, politician, and
Porter, slave and would-be-master, each
Grasping their fate in paper bags soaked
With the grease of profit, choked in desire,
The blood dried on Death's frayed cuffs,
Boatman, farmer, astronaut and technician,

Ah the technicians, their inheritance a night
Out with bad story telling and craft beer
Because no one ever cared else but to sell
The life's work of snails, given over to rabbits
Intent upon procreation, the brokers, the value-
Makers, the ignorant clerks licking cocks for
A weekend in the Islands once a decade, for
Photographs of holidays, blenders bought
And children graduated, such promise, such
Promise, such primrose promise, they all pray to the
Same god whose name rots their eyes and fills
Their brains with leftovers heated daily
With microwaves, soaked in change, marinated
In daily remembrance to forget that their skin,
What they curse in each mirror they pass,
Fell off that day, that minute, never to return
But renewed that it might become dust.