

In a Station of the Metro

Ezra Pound

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
petals on a wet, black bough.

1913

Easter, 1916

W. B. Yeats

I HAVE met them at close of day  
Coming with vivid faces  
From counter or desk among grey  
Eighteenth-century houses.  
I have passed with a nod of the head  
Or polite meaningless words,  
Or have lingered awhile and said  
Polite meaningless words,  
And thought before I had done  
Of a mocking tale or a gibe  
To please a companion  
Around the fire at the club,  
Being certain that they and I  
But lived where motley is worn:  
All changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent  
In ignorant good-will,  
Her nights in argument  
Until her voice grew shrill.  
What voice more sweet than hers  
When, young and beautiful,  
She rode to harriers?  
This man had kept a school  
And rode our winged horse;  
This other his helper and friend  
Was coming into his force;  
He might have won fame in the end,  
So sensitive his nature seemed,  
So daring and sweet his thought.  
This other man I had dreamed  
A drunken, vainglorious lout.  
He had done most bitter wrong  
To some who are near my heart,  
Yet I number him in the song;  
He, too, has resigned his part  
In the casual comedy;  
He, too, has been changed in his turn,  
Transformed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone  
Through summer and winter seem

Enchanted to a stone  
To trouble the living stream.  
The horse that comes from the road.  
The rider, the birds that range  
From cloud to tumbling cloud,  
Minute by minute they change;  
A shadow of cloud on the stream  
Changes minute by minute;  
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,  
And a horse plashes within it;  
The long-legged moor-hens dive,  
And hens to moor-cocks call;  
Minute by minute they live:  
The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice  
Can make a stone of the heart.  
O when may it suffice?  
That is Heaven's part, our part  
To murmur name upon name,  
As a mother names her child  
When sleep at last has come  
On limbs that had run wild.  
What is it but nightfall?  
No, no, not night but death;  
Was it needless death after all?  
For England may keep faith

For all that is done and said.  
We know their dream; enough  
To know they dreamed and are dead;  
And what if excess of love  
Bewildered them till they died?  
I write it out in a verse -  
MacDonagh and MacBride  
And Connolly and Pearse  
Now and in time to be,  
Wherever green is worn,  
Are changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

1916

The Hollow Men

T. S. Eliot

*Mistah Kurtz—he dead.*

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.

1925

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers

Adrienne Rich

Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,

Bright topaz denizens of a world of green.

They do not fear the men beneath the tree;

They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.

Aunt Jennifer's finger fluttering through her wool

Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.

The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band

Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.

When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie  
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.  
The tigers in the panel that she made  
Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.

1951

Daddy

Sylvia Plath

You do not do, you do not do  
Any more, black shoe  
In which I have lived like a foot  
For thirty years, poor and white,  
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.  
You died before I had time---  
Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,  
Ghastly statue with one gray toe  
Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic  
Where it pours bean green over blue  
In the waters off the beautiful Nauset.  
I used to pray to recover you.

Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town

Scraped flat by the roller

Of wars, wars, wars.

But the name of the town is common.

My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.

So I never could tell where you

Put your foot, your root,

I never could talk to you.

The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.

Ich, ich, ich, ich,

I could hardly speak.

I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

An engine, an engine,

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna

Are not very pure or true.  
With my gypsy ancestress and my weird luck  
And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack  
I may be a bit of a Jew.

I have always been sacred of you,  
With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.  
And your neat mustache  
And your Aryan eye, bright blue.  
Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You----

Not God but a swastika  
So black no sky could squeak through.  
Every woman adores a Fascist,  
The boot in the face, the brute  
Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,  
In the picture I have of you,  
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot  
But no less a devil for that, no not  
Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.  
I was ten when they buried you.  
At twenty I tried to die  
And get back, back, back to you.

I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,  
And they stuck me together with glue.  
And then I knew what to do.  
I made a model of you,  
A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.  
And I said I do, I do.  
So daddy, I'm finally through.  
The black telephone's off at the root,  
The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two---  
The vampire who said he was you  
And drank my blood for a year,  
Seven years, if you want to know.  
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart  
And the villagers never liked you.  
They are dancing and stamping on you.  
They always knew it was you.  
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

1962

Eve to her Daughters

Judith Wright

"It was not I who began it.

Turned out into draughty caves,

hungry so often, having to work for our bread,

hearing the children whining,

I was nevertheless not unhappy.

Where Adam went I was fairly contented to go.

I adapted myself to the punishment: it was my life.

But Adam, you know...!

He kept on brooding over the insults,

over the trick They had played on us, over the scolding.

He had discovered a flaw in himself

and he had to make up for it.

Outside Eden the earth was imperfect,

the seasons changed, the game was fleet-footed,

he had to work for our living, and he didn't like it.

He even complained of my cooking

(it was hard to compete with Heaven).

So he set to work.

The earth must be made a new Eden

with central heating, domesticated animals,

mechanical harvesters, combustion engines,

escalators, refrigerators,  
and modern means of communication  
and multiplied opportunities for safe investment  
and higher education for Abel and Cain  
and the rest of the family  
You can see how pride had been hurt.

In the process he had to unravel everything,  
because he believed that mechanism  
was the whole secret-he was always mechanical-minded.  
He got to the very inside of the whole machine  
exclaiming as he went So this is how it works!  
And now that I know how it works, why, I must have invented it.  
As for God and the Other, they cannot be demonstrated,  
and what cannot be demonstrated  
doesn't exist.  
You see, he had always been jealous.

Yes, he got to the centre  
where nothing at all can be demonstrated.  
And clearly he doesn't exist; but he refuses  
to accept the conclusion.  
You see, he was always an egotist.

It was warmer than this in the cave;  
there was none of this fall-out.  
I would suggest, for the sake of the children,

that it's time you took over.

But you are my daughters, you inherit my own faults of character;  
you are submissive, following Adam  
even beyond existence.

Faults of character have their own logic  
and it always works out.  
I observed this with Abel and Cain.

Perhaps the whole elaborate fable  
right from the beginning  
is meant to demonstrate this: perhaps it's the whole secret.  
Perhaps nothing exists but our faults?  
At least they can be demonstrated.

But it's useless to make  
such a suggestion to Adam.  
He has turned himself into God,  
who is faultless, and doesn't exist."

(1966)