

The Waste Land **Structure Sheet**

I. The Burial of the Dead: Ironic that *April is the cruelest month; *Marie avoids staying to see winter; nothing gives relief; dry rock, no water, fear; people neither living or dead; *even modern tarot woman says: “fear death by water” and she has a bad cold; walking dead all around London Bridge; *Stetson’s corpse of course won’t yield.

II. A Game of Chess: Grandeur of yesterday pictured; woman can’t understand it; it says nothing to her; *rich people in the first of the two scenes can’t communicate; must have chess, which has lost its ancient meaning. The poor people in the pub can’t communicate either. *Their discussions center on abortion, false teeth, and drink, while HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME (for closing of the pub) is called out.

III. The Fire Sermon: Lovers are gone; nymphs have departed; narrator sits and weeps; behind him he hears the rattle of dry bones, sterile sounds; car horns and motors carry Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring; Tieresius, the blind prophet, sees the images and, having seen, can prophesy the rest; * a man comes to make love to typist home at teatime; leaves by the dark stairs; she has not emotional response; river sweats oil and tar; lust is burning, burning.

IV. Death by Water: (“The exact significance of this section, which Pound insisted was ‘an integral part of the poem,’ has always been very difficult to determine....”) At least he died by water (?)

V. What the Thunder Said: People once alive are now dead; there is only rock and no water; there is thunder and no rain; empty wells, filled with bats; only wind in the chapel; the thunder speaks: Give, Sympathize, Control. Civilization is crumbling; narrator sits fishing with arid plain behind him. Shall I at least get my own lands in order?

Lines for focus in class:

1: “April is the cruelest month . . .”

6-19. “Winter kept us warm . . . I [Marie] read, much of the night, and go south in winter.”

44-59: “Madame Sosostris . . . One must be so careful these days.”

69-72 “ . . . Stetson! . . . Will it bloom this year?”

131-138: “What shall I do now? . . . And we shall play a game of chess . . . a knock upon the door.”

141-172: “HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME . . . good night, good night.”

219-256: “I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives . . . And puts a record on the gramophone.”

400-end: “*Da/Datta*: what have we given . . . Shantih shantih shantih”