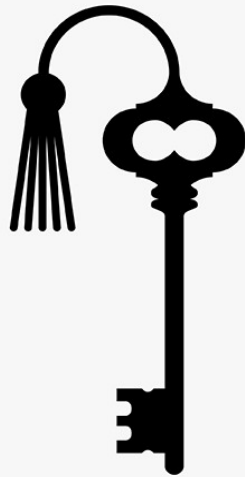


L I T E R A T U R Z I M M E R



T.S. ELIOT



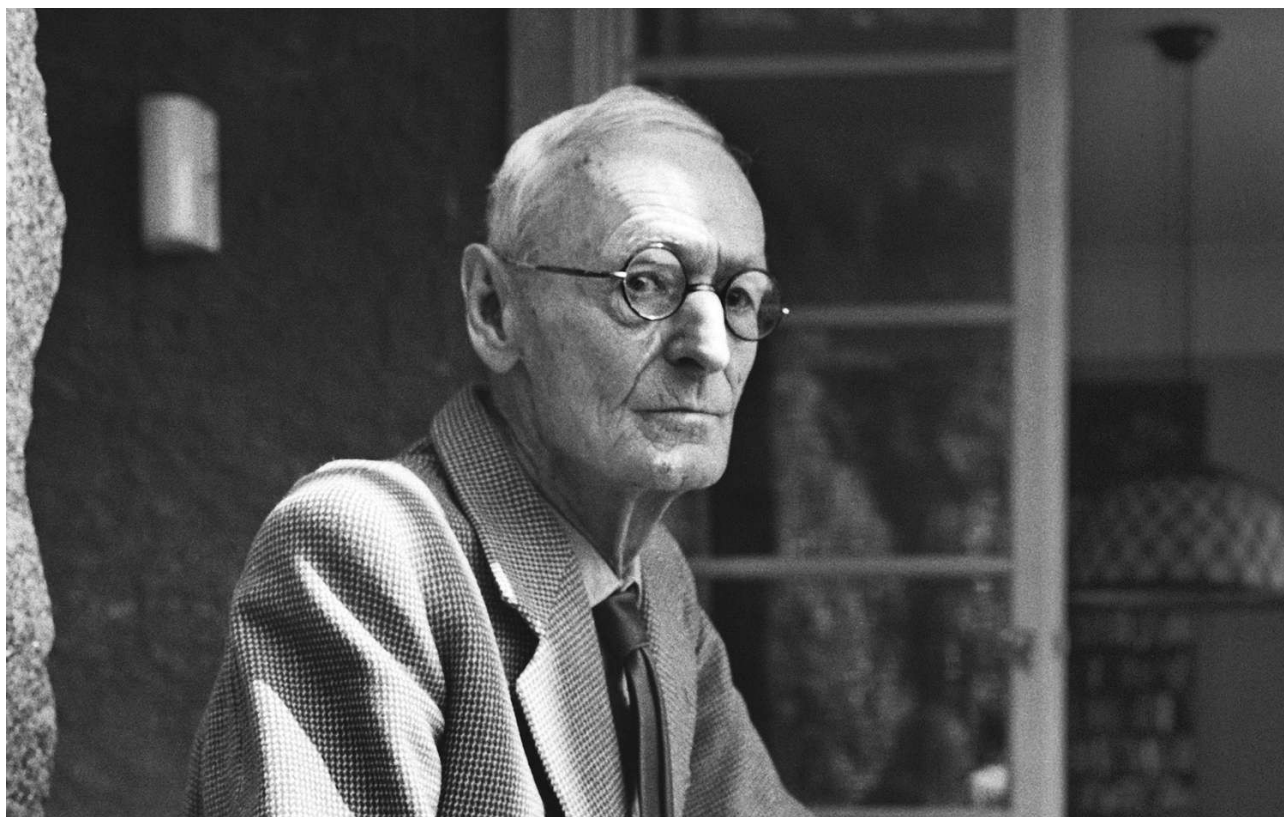
T.S. ELIOT

Little Gidding (last part)
(from Four Quartets)

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph. And any action
Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the seas throat
Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.
We die with the dying:
See, they depart, and we go with them.
We are born with the dead:
See, they return, and bring us with them.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lY3fI_78d60&t=832s

HERMANN HESSE



Stufen

Wie jede Blüte welkt und jede Jugend
Dem Alter weicht, blüht jede Lebensstufe,
Blüht jede Weisheit auch und jede Tugend
Zu ihrer Zeit und darf nicht ewig dauern.
Es muß das Herz bei jedem Lebensrufe
Bereit zum Abschied sein und Neubeginne,
Um sich in Tapferkeit und ohne Trauern
In andre, neue Bindungen zu geben.
Und jedem Anfang wohnt ein Zauber inne,
Der uns beschützt und der uns hilft, zu leben.

Wir sollen heiter Raum um Raum durchschreiten,
An keinem wie an einer Heimat hängen,
Der Weltgeist will nicht fesseln uns und engen,
Er will uns Stuf' um Stufe heben, weiten.
Kaum sind wir heimisch einem Lebenskreise
Und traulich eingewohnt, so droht Erschlaffen;
Nur wer bereit zu Aufbruch ist und Reise,
Mag lähmender Gewöhnung sich entrafen.

Es wird vielleicht auch noch die Todesstunde
Uns neuen Räumen jung entgegen senden,
Des Lebens Ruf an uns wird niemals enden,
Wohlan denn, Herz, nimm Abschied und gesunde!

MARY OLIVER

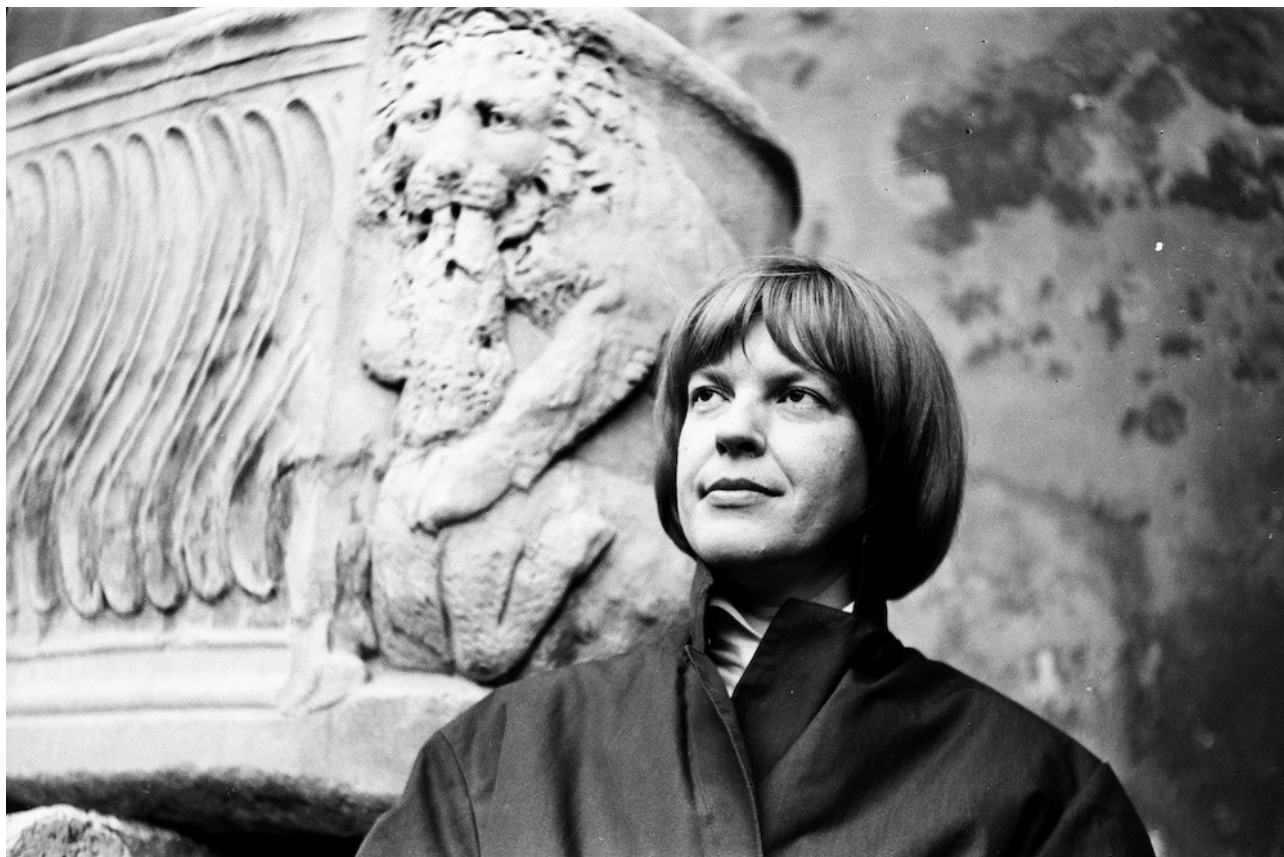


The Journey

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice—
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
Mend my life”
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.

But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do—
determined to save
the only life you could save.

INGEBORG BACHMANN



Die Welt ist weit

Die Welt ist weit und die Wege von Land zu Land,
und der Orte sind viele, ich habe alle gekannt,
ich habe von allen Türmen Städte gesehen,
die Menschen, die kommen werden und die schon gehen.
Weit waren die Felder von Sonne und Schnee,
zwischen Schienen und Straßen, zwischen Berg und See.
Und der Mund der Welt war weit und voll Stimmen an meinem Ohr
und schrieb, noch des Nachts, die Gesänge der Vielfalt vor.
Den Wein aus fünf Bechern trank ich in einem Zuge aus,
mein nasses Haar trocknen vier Winde in ihrem wechselnden Haus.

Die Fahrt ist zu Ende,
doch ich bin mit nichts zu Ende gekommen,
jeder Ort hat ein Stück von meinem Lieben genommen,
jedes Licht hat mir ein Aug verbrannt,
in jedem Schatten zerriß mein Gewand.
Die Fahrt ist zu Ende.
Noch bin ich mit jeder Ferne verkettet,
doch kein Vogel hat mich über die Grenzen gerettet,
kein Wasser, das in die Mündung zieht,
treibt mein Gesicht, das nach unten sieht,
treibt meinen Schlaf, der nicht wandern will ...

Ich weiß die Welt näher und still.

Hinter der Welt wird ein Baum stehen
Mit Blättern aus Wolken und einer Krone aus Blau.
In seine Rinde aus rotem Sonnenband
Schneidet der Wind unser Herz
und kühlt es mit Tau.

Hinter der Welt wird ein Baum stehen,
eine Frucht in den Wipfeln,
mit einer Schale aus Gold,
Laß uns hinübersehen,
wenn sie im Herbst der Zeit
in Gottes Hände rollt!

JACQUELINE JOHNSON



Beginnings

I did not expect to find a river
so far inland.

What underground tributary,
lake is your source?

It goes on for miles into the
center of an unending earth.

Back then everything was music,
wind running through rooster hair,
scratchy weed, wild onion, wheat;
blue gingham skirt, long nappy braids,
brown and redbone too.

When they built the first pyramids,
those Nubian Negroes did not sweat;
they used music, ancient tones, hoot wails,
song, prayers, and shouts that lifted earth into air.

How did melody find you?
Girl-child fingers banged upon ebony
and pounced upon ivory keys.
All around were concentric circles of
arms and laps; family allowing and
trusting who you were—to just be.

Everyone—parents, aunts, siblings, and
cousins left the parlor room regularly
to you and those unseen hosts of
treble clefts and jazz arias yet to be born.

Carolyn Marie Rodgers



The Translation of Eve

and flesh had breath. a soul began to be. the rise and eve's of my
eve-ness. even. balance. man. now, wo-man, even me. Lord. even me ... Eve.
the beginning of yeses and no's.
the paradigm of mourning and sorrow.
a door opened and another one closes. prayers, and the "we wish,"
forever, transformed.

Transformation.

So then, what is the life but a genealogy of ways.
ways, like silver and golden leaves on a madrigal tree, singing,
drifting and falling away. into tongues ...

and the i am is illuminated. the i am of every man. not the great
I AM of forevermore, but the small everyman. and then, after the
heels of our souls have been bruised. a crucifixion. a resurrection.
a Transfiguration. and the translations began again.

and now our breath leaves flesh and yet here is the consciousness of
mystery, reformed, informed.
our endings are all reborn.
like the we wish, the beginnings and the endings, the life, eternity,
forever, transformed.

CHARLES WRIGHT



READING LAO TZU AGAIN IN THE NEW YEAR

Snub end of a dismal year, deep in the dwarf orchard,

The sky with its undercoat of blackwash and point stars,
I stand in the dark and answer to
My life, this shirt I want to take off,

which is on fire . . .

Old year, new year, old song, new song, nothing will change hands

Each time we change heart, each time
Like a hard cloud that has drifted all day

Michael Prior



New Year

I've resolved last year's resolutions
watching this bonfire fail to flame.
I've ignored December's iterations,
unsolved my consolations:
a card, a call, a paper crane's blame-
less fractions of the same.
I can't solve for time's absolutions
watching these embers fail to flame.

Joseph Brodsky



December 24, 1971
For V.S.

When it's Christmas we're all of us magi.
At the grocers' all slipping and pushing.
Where a tin of halvah, coffee-flavored,
is the cause of a human assault-wave
by a crowd heavy-laden with parcels:
each one his own king, his own camel.

Nylon bags, carrier bags, paper cones,
caps and neckties all twisted up sideways.
Reek of vodka and resin and cod,
orange mandarins, cinnamon, apples.
Floods of faces, no sign of a pathway
toward Bethlehem, shut off by blizzard.

And the bearers of moderate gifts
leap on buses and jam all the doorways,
disappear into courtyards that gape,
though they know that there's nothing inside there:
not a beast, not a crib, nor yet her,
round whose head gleams a nimbus of gold.

Emptiness. But the mere thought of that
brings forth lights as if out of nowhere.
Herod reigns but the stronger he is,
the more sure, the more certain the wonder.
In the constancy of this relation
is the basic mechanics of Christmas.

That's what they celebrate everywhere,
for its coming push tables together.
No demand for a star for a while,
but a sort of good will touched with grace
can be seen in all men from afar,
and the shepherds have kindled their fires.

Snow is falling: not smoking but sounding
chimney pots on the roof, every face like a stain.
Herod drinks. Every wife hides her child.
He who comes is a mystery: features
are not known beforehand, men's hearts may
not be quick to distinguish the stranger.

But when drafts through the doorway disperse
the thick mist of the hours of darkness
and a shape in a shawl stands revealed,
both a newborn and Spirit that's Holy
in your self you discover; you stare
skyward, and it's right there:

a star.

Carlos Penela



AHAV

Onde está, onde se agocha, que tremor o revela
entre tantos rostros, tantos, entre tantas voces, tan alleas;
baixo que pel agarda, en que soño esculpe outro soño,
con que danza ou contradanza entra nese espazo
de lumes vivos onde as palabra se fundan, onde abre
a rosa o seu segredo? Como unha profecía feita luz,
como as aves que cruzan libres o mundo e o vento
que anuncia unha estación limpa de sombras vencidas.
Que marea escribirá o seu nome coa verdade da espuma,
por que vieiros irán solitarios novos pasos onda el?
É antigo como os anxos, é poderoso como a terra escura,
no seu labirinto serán salvos os corpos, será devorado
o pranto. Haberá signos que falarán desa alborada,
mans que sintan a carne real dos días, ollares renacidos
sobre as cinzas, con feridas e bronces alzándose
para proclamar o seu milagre, para declarar a súa batalla.
De onde vén ninguén o soubo nunca, pero nace como un río
e como un río nos leva, arrolados no fulgor da súa sonata,
máis alén das noites, do silencio que o tempo ruín conxura.
Das fronteiras desa dor que se deixa atrás sen sal e sen condena.

AHAV

Wo ist es, wo weilt es wohl, welches Zittern offenbart es
unter so vielen Gesichtern, so vielen, unter so vielen fremden Stimmen;
unter welcher Haut harrt es aus, in welchem Traum meißelt es einen anderen Traum,
mit welchem Tanz oder Gegentanz betritt es jenen Raum
lebendigen Feuers, wo die Worte sich gründen, wo die Rose
ihr Geheimnis öffnet? Wie eine zu Licht gewordene Prophezeiung,
wie die Vögel, die frei die Welt durchqueren, und der Wind,
der eine Jahreszeit verkündet, rein von besiegtten Schatten.
Welche Flut wird den Namen mit der Wahrheit des Schaums schreiben,
auf welchen Pfaden werden einsam neue Schritte an seiner Seite gehen?
Es ist alt wie die Engel, es ist mächtig wie die dunkle Erde,
in seinem Labyrinth werden die Körper gerettet, wird das Weinen
verschlungen werden. Es wird Zeichen geben, die von jenem Aufgang sprechen,
Hände, die das reale Fleisch der Tage fühlen, Blicke, wiedergeboren
über der Asche, mit Wunden und Bronze, die sich erheben,
um ein Wunder zu verkünden, um eine Schlacht zu erklären.
Woher es kommt, wusste niemand je, doch es wird geboren wie ein Fluss
und wie ein Fluss trägt es uns fort, eingelullt im Glanz einer Sonate,
über die Nächte hinaus, über das Schweigen, das die schnöde Zeit beschwört.
Über die Grenzen jenes Schmerzes hinaus, den man hinter sich lässt, ohne Salz und
ohne Urteil.

Andrej Grilc



Sisyphus in the desert / excerpt

Are you happy?
Happy is for succers!
(unknown)

The smell of an unwashed body, of onions, of houseplants, of mold, of rotting oranges in the trash, of pencil graphite, of woolen slippers drying on hot radiators.

Mr. O decided to examine his apathy. The question was: Was he truly too old to still feel? He wanted to be enthusiastic—no doubt about it. He wanted to feel alive. But his face was dead, and his mind had a weak pulse, barely noticeable amid his daily routines.

He made a list. On the list he put places where he had last felt good, where he had experienced the most intense moments of happiness—places he usually visited alone and where he felt safe, welcome, and at ease. A kind of inverted bucket list.

He quickly realized that most of these places were connected to food: cafés, eateries, restaurants. This did not surprise him. He loved food immensely. His body made that obvious.

The list:

Restaurant A, Barcelona
Café Tropea, Russell Square Park, London
Les Deux Magots, Paris
Santo Spirito, Vienna
Le Mercerie, New York
Beach Tavern Dubovica, Hvar
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Lido Beach in Venice in winter
Manhattan Bridge, NYC
Cacio e Pepe at Taverna Agape, Rome
Prado, Madrid
National Library of Slovenia, Ljubljana, and its silence
Concertgebouw, Amsterdam
Segovia, Spain – chestnuts in autumn
Mahler's Eighth at the Albert Hall
Havana Club, Cuba
Restaurant Nada, Vrbnik
Baščaršija, Sarajevo
The Pantheon with insane ice cream from Giolitti

Café Savoy, Prague
Terrace at the Maison de la Photographie, Marrakesh
Restaurant Mayer am Pfarrhof, Vienna
Curzon Cinema in Bloomsbury, London

He strained to wrest a few more places from his memory—places that were not gray, not boring, not average.

The list was a map of his life, of his memories. He was writing a kind of will for his life and his feelings. How did he feel?

He felt nothing. Just this eternal nothingness, stretching on and on.

He opened the window. Cold autumn air poured into the room. He stood with both hands braced against the table by the window, breathing in the damp air.

He reached a conclusion: If the world no longer had meaning, no more surprises for him, no more feeling—then he might as well throw himself out the window. And why not. Why the fuck not.

Mr. O stepped onto the windowsill on the fifth floor. The window faced the inner courtyard and the church tower. Evening spread rosy colors across the sky. He was scared of the heights and glanced into the depth like a coward.

If I jump, I'll land on a parked white van—plumbing services. How unglamorous, he thought. The idea suddenly repulsed him.

The bell in the tower began its evening toll.

He stepped back onto the parquet floor, ran to the bathroom, and emptied the contents of his stomach into the toilet.

After washing and calming himself, he returned to the room and closed the window. It was cold, and his body was trembling. He hugged his knees, rocking. He picked the list up from the floor and placed it on the table.

Small steps, small steps, Mr. O told himself, repeating the therapist's mantra. I can always kill myself later.

Reading the list soothed him, just as reading cookbooks before sleep usually did—complex French dessert recipes that brought him peace because they proved that the world was still in balance, that there were still things that were right and good. Laws were still laws, and if ingredients were used in the correct order and quantities, the result was always the same, regardless of the day.

He read through his special list once more and, after brief hesitation, decided to visit all the places on it once again. He gave himself another chance. He set himself a goal, and his thoughts grew clearer.

He went online and bought plane tickets. He spread the journeys over the next six months. Money did not matter. He had some savings—and who was he saving for, if not himself?

At the end, he carefully folded the list.

It was no longer a farewell.

It was a promise.

NOVO LETO

Dnevi so tisti,
ki jih preživlja zima.
Okno in tišina
sta isti stvari, v svetlobi in času.

Verjel bom takrat, ko zimi ne bo sledila pomlad,
da bodo nekaj takšnega kot kurenti s klopotci,
večji kot Bog.
Da ohranijo našo pot čez kozmos v elipso
spet domov.

Brez strahu se prepustimo da je tako.
In tako je bilo od nekdaj.
Brez strahu, da ko zaspimo svet potuje
in mi z njim,

dokler so dnevi,
dnevi so šteti, ki jih preživlja zima,

dokler jih ne pričnemo
šteti od začetka.

NEW YEAR

The days are those
that winter lives through.
The window and the silence
are the same thing,
in light and in time.

I will believe only
when winter is not followed anymore by spring.
That there is something greater than God, like a Kurent
- devils servant with bells and clappers,
to preserve our path across the cosmos in an ellipse
back home.

Without fear, let us surrender to things being so.
And so it has always been.
Without fear that when we fall asleep the world travels on
and we glide with it.

As long as there are days—
days are numbered—that winter lives through,

until we begin
to count them again from the beginning.