

To find a friend who has these qualities, 25
 Who has, and gives
 Those qualities upon which friendship lives.
 How much it means that I say this to you--
 Without these friendships--life, what *cauchemar*!!

Among the windings of the violins 30
 And the arriettes
 Of cracked cornets
 Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
 Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,
 Capricious monotone
 That is at least one definite "false note." 35
 --Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
 Admire the monuments.
 Discuss the late events,
 Correct our watches by the public clocks.
 Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks. 40

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom
 She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
 And twists one in her finger while she talks.
 "Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know
 What life is, you who hold it in your hands"; 5
 (Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)
 "You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
 And youth is cruel, and has no remorse
 And smiles at situations which it cannot see."
 I smile, of course, 10
 And go on drinking tea.
 "Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall

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My burried life, and Paris in the Spring,
 I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
 To be wonderful and youthful, after all." 15

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
 Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:
 "I am always sure that you understand
 My feelings, always sure that you feel,
 Sure that accross the gulf you reach your hand. 20

You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
 You will go on, and when you have prevailed
 You can say: at this point many a one has failed.
 But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
 To give you, what can you receive from me? 25
 Only the friendship and the sympathy
 Of one about to reach her journey's end.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends..."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
 For what she has said to me? 30
 You will see me any morning in the park
 Reading the comics and the sporting page.
 Particularly I remark
 An English countess goes upon the stage.
 A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance, 35
 Another bank defaulter has confessed.
 I keep my countenance,
 I remain self-possessed
 Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired
 Reiterates some worn-out common song 40
 With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
 Recalling things that other people have desired.
 Are these ideas right or wrong? 43

III

The October night comes down; returning as before
 Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease
 I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door
 And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.
 "And so you are going abroad; and when do you return? 5
 But that a useless question.
 You hardly know when you are coming back,
 You will find so much to learn."
 My smile falls heavily among the bric-a-brack.

"Perhaps you can write to me." 10
 My self-possession flares up for a second;
 This is as I had reckoned.
 "I have been wondering frequently of late
 (But our beginnings never know our ends!)
 Why we have not developed into friends." 15
 I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark
 Suddenly, his expression in a glass.
 My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,
 They all were sure our feelings would relate 20
 So closely! I myself can hardly understand.
 We must leave it now to fate.
 You will write, at any rate.
 Perhaps it is not too late.
 I shall sit here, serving tea to friends." 25

And I must borrow every changing shape
 To find expression...dance, dance
 Like a dancing bear.
 Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.

Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance-- 30

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose;
Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
With the smoke coming down above the housetops;
Doubtful, for a while 35

Not knowing what to feel or if I understand
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon...
Would she not have the advantage, after all?
This music is succesful with a "dying fall"
Now that we talk of dying-- 40
And should I have the right to smile?

Thomas Stearns Eliot, 1910

POTRAIT D'UNE FEMME

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
 London has swept about you this score years
 And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
 Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
 Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price. 5
 Great minds have sought you--lacking someone else.
 You have been second always. Tragical?
 No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
 One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
 One average mind-- with one thought less, each year. 10
 Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit
 Hours, where something might have floated up.
 And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.
 You are a person of some interest, one comes to you
 And takes strange gain away: 15
 Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;
 Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale or two,
 Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else
 That might prove useful and yet never proves,
 That never fits a corner or shows use, 20
 Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:
 The tarnished gaudy, wonderful old work;
 Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,
 These are your riches, your great store; and yet
 For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things, 25
 Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:
 In the slow float of differing light and deep,
 No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,
 Nothing that's quite your own.
 Yet this is you. 30

Ezra Loomis Pound, 1912

POTRAIT OF A LADY

Your thighs are appletrees
 whose blossoms touch the sky.
 Which sky? The sky
 where Watteau hung a lady's
 slipper. Your kness 5
 are a southern breeze--or
 a gust of snow. Agh! what
 sort of man was Fragonard?
 --as if that answered
 anything. Ah, yes--below 10
 the kness, since the tune
 drops that way, it is
 one of those white summer days,
 the tall grass of your ankles
 flickers upon the shore-- 15
 Which shore?--
 the sand clings to my lips--
 Which shore?
 Agh, petals maybe. How
 should I know? 20
 Which shore? Which shore?
 I said petals from an appletree. 22

William Carlos Williams, 1915