

T.S. Eliot:

Now, to finish off that same period, "The Hollow Men." It's a poem which I don't altogether approve myself, but I recorded it some years ago. And for anybody who has heard that record, might be interesting to see whether I now read it any differently from the way I read it 14 years ago.

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 color, paralyzed 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.

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.

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.

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.

(SINGING) 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-- act falls the Shadow.

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.