

T.S. Eliot:

Now, of a later period in that, the period of 1917 to 1920, "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" is my choice because it also has a certain local sentimental association. My figure of Sweeney is, of course, like many other characters of fiction, an amalgam from metals of very different sources and kinds, with, I hope, something in it that I have added myself. But amongst the leading and the chief ingredients were three friends of my youth, all now dead. All citizens of South Boston, and none of them was named Sweeney.

[LAUGHTER]

I should add that two, at least, of these friends were men of much more lovable disposition than the use which I have made of them might suggest.

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees, letting his arms hang down to laugh. The zebra stripes along his jaw swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon slide westward toward the River Plate. Death and the Raven drift above, and Sweeney guards the horned gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog are veiled. And hushed the shrunken seas, the person in the Spanish cape tries to sit down Sweeney's knees.

Slips and pulls the tablecloth, overturns a coffee cup. Reorganized upon the floor, she yawns and draws a stocking up.

The silent man in mocha brown sprawls at the window sill and gapes. The waiter brings in oranges, bananas, figs, and hothouse grapes.

The silent vertebrate in brown contracts and concentrates, withdraws.

Rachel, nee Rabinovitch, stares at the grapes with murderous paws. She and the lady in the cape are suspect, thought to be in league. Therefore, the man with heavy eyes declines the gambit, shows fatigue. Leaves the room and reappears.

Outside the window, leaning in, branches of wisteria circumscribe a golden grin.

The host with someone indistinct converses at the door apart. The nightingales are singing near the Convent of the Sacred Heart. And sang within the bloody wood when Agamemnon cried aloud and let their liquid siftings fall to stain in the stiff dishonored shroud.