



WASTED
BY
LARRY KERSCHNER
&
RICHARD DENNER

諸行は無常	Impermanence
昨日は悟り	Satori yesterday
今日は下痢便	Diarrhea today
これって一体何なんでしょう	All things pass

ELLENSBURG

D PRESS

2022

T. S. Eliot's magisterial *The Waste Land* encapsulates mythical and historical memory, disillusionment, and despair in the wake of World War I. Kerschner and Denner's *Wasted* looks inward one hundred years later, as through the other end of a telescope. Timeless, spaceless, existential without the ism; sucked into the cycle of creation and dissolution; unraveling the frayed end of the rope from which our era dangles by a thread: "Did you think the Kali Yuga was going to be easy?"

—Jacquelynn Baas

Testimonial:

Jacquelynn Baas is a cultural historian, writer, curator, and Director Emeritus of the University of California Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Her books include *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art* (2004), *Smile of the Buddha: Eastern Philosophy and Western Art from Monet to Today* (2005), and most recently *Marcel Duchamp and the Art of Life* (2019).

Cover photo:

Jobar in Eastern Ghouta, on the outskirts of the Syrian capital Damascus on April 2, 2018.
(AFP Photo)



WASTED

1. A Spy in the House of Death

Grief and loss are silent, slinking through
a country soaked in blood and sorrow,
the very blackness illuminating
a gloomy vision inside a skull infused
by a single photon of comfort flaring
from a burning bush in this valley of shadows,
knowing death is meaningless since life
is the illusion with time offering a language
of movement toward the flowers
blossoming here, lighting a rocket,
blazing into wonder

Bareback on horses, the two of us,
an easy lope into sunlight
poet lines dancing, angels in our souls,
your buckskin and my paint
mounts opening a gate, easy lope
into sunlight through barriers
I'd call sublime—with blindness upon me,
yr words' resonate joy

felt more than seen in my own hourglass
passages, messages decoded, signs
in sandstone, first note on Manastash Ridge
worsted, twisted—tho it is said we wasted
our substance with riotous living,
prodigal sons don't really change
their minds, just run out of money
If it once becomes dark, there's no chance
of a Snark—we have hardly a minute to waste! when likely wasted—

Was it Robert Duncan or Paul Celan
who said something has wreckt
the world I am in, something or nothing,
in or out obscuring everything that is not me?

A road enters town and leaves, Hwy 97, Old Highway 10, University Avenue, before that, 8th
Avenue, before that, way way back
a winding trail, for Lewis and Clark led by Sacagawea on their way to Snoqualmie Pass, now
traffic whipping by a row of modest homes with frail facades taking the brunt of a coded society
controlling the air, the water,
the fire—I am what I think, from threshold to threshold. a light beam in this unreal city

2. Socrates Quizzes His Student

Socrates judged that poetry feeds the weakest part of the soul—Gregory Corso believed that it
makes no difference whether a poem is abundantly distributed or not as long as it holds the truth
and power of the poet's advanced consciousness it will

Whether understood or not, whether accepted or not, reach the main and general consciousness
of mankind in time and thereby benefit it—such is the poem's magic and this is the true mystery
of poetry, its ability to advance and better the lot of our minds

Reading poetry as a form of voyeurism the poet from County Sligo announced on Zoom that she
thought she was live her bright sparkling words certainly were she upset the secret banshee

whose presence warned of an impending death in the house sunshine

Was definitely not wanted there needing a furtive quaff from his poetry bottle a covert spy from the house of words just held on the very best he could manage Inshallah! At 5000 degrees the shadow silhouette of her body was imprinted on the stone steps in Hiroshima as if some Kilroy was there

J. Edgar danced in his tutu for his G-man lover while he and Eisenhower refused to acknowledge their African relatives

Elephants and dolphins gather around their dead—dogs are said to eat their own vomit

Except for humans, animals of the same species do not generally devour each other

When Socrates quizzes his student on poetic meters, Strepsiades declares that he knows quite well what a dactyl is and gives him the finger

Lucky Lexi living long loving life laughing at the eternal footman, for the time being the time being, remembering winter in Fairbanks awaiting Allen at the airport, us exhaling little cartoon balloons of CO₂

Space, oh, there's plenty between us, but time makes it impermanent—if there was

No phenomena, there'd be no time—clocks die when their time is up

I've heard the Queen is some kind of lizard person

Waiting, am I early or am I late— or am I?

You have learned about all there is to know loving it and dotting it down

I drown out

the sirens' seductive tune

as the dancers dance
in the limpid light of noon

away from
another newsy day

Hurry up.
It's time.

3. Burning Down the House

From the Med on meds, heading towards dead filled with espresso. Palatine radioed that the rats are fighting in the hallways with light sabers. The Republicans (not the Irish kind) charge a woman with murder for a self-induced abortion. SCOTUS is aghast but silent so far.

violent from the north/

cold/

my bones ache

white rushing roar/

wind/

my teeth chatter

slanting/snow/screen/

blind/

my mustache freezes

steaming caribou liver/

hidden/

my belly rumbles

BASE

The Source

From whence comes the poem

“inspiration”

need to fulfill promise

result of a prayer, or

habit

Inspiration

flooding feeling, bliss

the Zone

vision-external-vision

Apocalyptic need

to write like crazy

PATH

Make the poem

“We’ve come to bring you metaphors for your poems.”

mind treasure is a Ter

Chaucer as Garab Dorje

Shakespeare as

Guru Rinpoche

Build like a box

a Grail for Gail—a poem

for her birthday, an occasion

inside out

Subconscious, or natural

first word

best word

beauty

outside in channel

ghosts, Martians

The Muse

Demons/Angels

Mind Ter

the Subconscious

Magic poetry IS spell-ing

Hypnotic intoxicants, both

“Just starts to happen”

Visualization – mind

Breath/rhythm – energy

Word – body

Tulku Sang-ngag dances

The Dance of King Gesar

FRUIT

Somehow things come

together

Brought its own solution

which was very poetic

Taught me how to draw

a bunny

Saying something

is more appropriate

than you could dream of

Saying something

more profound

even if you don't get it

Crow story—

how he got a drink

In the poem I was

able to cry

To name it kills it

“My cat died the other day.”

Confessional poem, in the 50s

sheared in a pen,

and then you stamp it

Don't want you to miss

the point

“Capture

phrases

that

come to

mind”

The occasion arises

by the occurrence

then, you somehow write it:

“...from an antique land.”

Stuff coming into life

that haunts you of

things I said

I shouldn't have

things said

I could have said better

things other people said

“It was a beautiful day, and I want to remember it.”

“Misery comes from every direction.”

“Whatever are we going to do about it, we can't always be watching TV?”

“I feel like a blind man who

doesn't know

where he is.”

Inner story

a séance

a poem

a book

a skit

the voice of the Supreme Source

“Did you think

the Kali Yuga was going to be easy?”

Poetry of the mind

poetry of the voice

poetry of the body

Quack

Quack

Quack

4. Death By Air

The Covid thing. A breathing thing. Smoke from fires, all summer, from every direction. A breathing thing. And then, *Waldenstrom Macroglobulinemia*, a rare blood disease catches me unaware, sneaks up like a slyer with a dagger beneath his cloak and nearly snuffs me out. A breathing thing. So, being a master of meditation, I holed up for a year, took online philosophy classes at CWU and wrote essays on subjects ranging from ecological degradation to psychedelic katabasis, allegorically synthesizing the emptiness within with the emptiness without and doing chemotherapy. I'm in remission. Lucky me, I have a brave son, like Virgil, who was my north star and guided me through the labyrinth of life.

Next, I was diagnosed with a case of Chronic Obstacle Pulmonary Disease, followed by a bout of pneumonia. Breathing things. The pneumonia put me in the intensive care ward at the local hospital. The doctor said I was septic. I had shot right through the Bardo of Dying into the Bardo of Supreme Reality and, sitting in full lotus in bed, I began my practice of Consciousness Transference, until the nurses stopped me, saying I was making monitors flash. After ten days of intensive care, I returned to the Bardo of Life.

5. What the Doctor Said

Smoking Gauloises and sipping espresso sitting on the deck above Deep Bay, Socrates said to ask why being gut shot is such a long and painful way to go and also to ask who makes a killing out of killing?

so the hospital chief admin called me into his office: "We are like a family here, we treat each other that way, so we don't really need a union. We treat each other like family."

Me: "So if we are just one big family, then a contract won't make a difference, will it?"

AH AH AH

Some of the words I didn't understand, but I found the imagery quite effective. Interesting line structure and rhythmic devices counterpoint the underlying metaphor of humanity in distress.

— ARMAN DENT

A superb fabrication.

— E.P.