

CAMBRIDGE

Prufrock in the corner of the chapel,  
in the shadow of an arch,  
behind a stair and pillar,  
transfixed by crucifix,  
waiting, serving.

Prufrock in the blast of a looming organ  
hears God speak thrice weekly,  
never telling the secret message -  
most compelling  
though not completely understood.

Prufrock takes the time for tea and indecision,  
and for vision and revisions  
to a theory of assistance  
for those less fortunate  
in other less mannered places.

Prufrock sings seraphic for the golden cross,  
Prufrock trembles for choirboy,  
Prufrock praying solemn for Queen and Empire,

Prufrock spreading anxious for the don,  
Prufrock scoliodic in his robes of office,  
Prufrock bowing to the bishop,  
Prufrock nods beneignly to the punters,  
Prufrock smooths his costume, nothing more.

Prufrock cautious, clever and ingenious,  
punctual, meticulous,  
respected and protected,  
obtuse.

Prufrock has the answers,  
answers surround him and sustain him,  
answers raised him,  
answers feed him,  
answers inspire and bleed him.

But there are no less fortunates in the sylvan quad  
to ask the questions.

Prufrock knows no questions.

I would live silent by the sea  
four seasons and a day  
To swallow up the tides and wind  
and clouds and waves and time,  
And contemplate the sacred line  
where heaven touches earth  
The passage hence mysterious  
to ineffable rebirth.

I would never ponder questions  
or theorize at night,  
Or listen to the thousand lies  
well crafted out of spite,  
Or edit disputatious text briefs,  
draft stinging curt replies,  
And answer only meekly  
when buying my supplies.

I would swim merry in the ocean  
and dance wild with the whales,  
Count puffins, stars and sea lions,  
and mackerel and snails,  
Cry sonnets grand defiant  
above the thundering surf,  
And plunge through the far horizon  
to that distant lovely place.

Where blessed and exuberant

would I make love with the sun

And return perhaps in morning

when the new day has begun.