

# Idiot Flesh, The Straw

We are the hollow men  
We're 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 colour, paralysed force, gesture without motion)

Let me wear disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin  
Behaving as the wind behaves

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here they receive the supplication of a dead man's hand

Waking alone  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here

In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together and avoid speech

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 and the act falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

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

Not with a bang but a whimper, thank you very much, good night.