

THE WASTE LAND

By
T. S. ELIOT

Winner of The Dal's 1922
Award.

This prize of two thousand
dollars is given annually to
a young American writer in
recognition of his service
to letters.

with more pressing matters. Finally, he told him angrily: 'Uper the gur gur the mungal sat sri akal.'

What he wanted to say was: 'You don't answer my prayers because you are a Muslim God. Had you been a Sikh God, you would have been more of a sport.'

A few days before the exchange was to take place, one of Bishan Singh's Muslim friends from Toba Tek Singh came to see him—the first time in fifteen years. Bishan Singh looked at him once and turned away, until a guard said to him: 'This is your old friend Fazal Din. He has come all the way to meet you.'

Bishan Singh looked at Fazal Din⁸ and began to mumble something. Fazal Din placed his hand on his friend's shoulder and said: 'I have been meaning to come for some time to bring you the news. All your family is well and has gone to India safely. I did what I could to help. Your daughter Roop Kaur⁹ . . . —he hesitated—'She is safe too . . . in India.'

Bishan Singh kept quiet. Fazal Din continued: 'Your family wanted me to make sure you were well. Soon you will be moving to India. What can I say, except that you should remember me to bhai Balbir Singh, bhai Vadhawa Singh and bahain! Amrit Kaur. Tell bhai Bibir Singh that Fazal Din is well by the grace of God. The two brown buffaloes he left behind are well too. Both of them gave birth to calves, but, unfortunately, one of them died after six days. Say I think of them often and to write to me if there is anything I can do.'

Then he added: 'Here, I brought you some rice crispies from home.' Bishan Singh took the gift and handed it to one of the guards. 'Where is Toba Tek Singh?' he asked.

'Where? Why, it is where it has always been.'

'In India or in Pakistan?'

'In India . . . no, in Pakistan.'

Without saying another word, Bishan Singh walked away, murmuring: 'Uper the gur gur the annexe the be dhyana the mung the dal of the Pakistan and Hindustan dur fittey moun.'

Meanwhile, exchange arrangements were rapidly getting finalised. Lists of lunatics from the two sides had been exchanged between the governments, and the date of transfer fixed.

On a cold winter evening, buses full of Hindu and Sikh lunatics, accompanied by armed police and officials, began moving out of the Lahore asylum towards Wagah,² the dividing line between India and Pakistan. Senior officials from the two sides in charge of exchange arrangements met, signed documents and the transfer got under way.

It was quite a job getting the men out of the buses and handing them over to officials. Some just refused to leave. Those who were persuaded to do so began to run pell-mell in every direction. Some were stark naked. All efforts to get

The Waste Land

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Poem
The first published text of
The Waste Land (1922)

Perspectives
Comments on the poem and on
Eliot from a range of interesting people

Notes
Annotations and references
explaining the text of the poem

Tips
How to get the best from this
electronic edition of *The Waste Land*

Performance
A specially filmed performance of
the entire poem by Fizza Saeed

Readings
How the poem is often read by
different voices including Fizza herself

Manuscript
A facsimile of Eliot's original manuscript
with hand-written notes by Ezra Pound

Gallery
A selection of photographs and images
related to the poem

CREDITS SETTINGS

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8. A Muslim name; the close friendship between Bishan Singh and Fazal Din works across their religious differences.

1. In Hindi and Punjabi, *bhai* means "brother" and *bahain* means "sister."
2. The main international crossing point between India and Pakistan, at the border near Amritsar and Lahore.