

Non sta

Naught standeth still, but all things swift and whirl
As far as in heaven and beneath is seen.
All things move, now up, now down,
Whether on a long or a short course,
Whether heavy or light;
Perchance thou too goest the same path
And to a like goal.

The sirens

Stein, Wars, S. 125 (GS 20)

The siren that warns for the bombardments is not working any more, I suppose it was worn out as they say here they have succeeded in putting it out of order, but who they they are nobody knows and now the Germans are to warn us by trumpeting but after all that does not really wake one up if one is really asleep so everybody prefers it, that is all everybody talks about is bombardments and naturally nobody is pleased, and whether the aim is good or not is hotly discussed, they say they should not fly so high, though they do admit that the precision of hitting is very great, nevertheless they say if they flew lower there would be less destruction round and about and as the defence is practically non-existent why not fly lower, others say they should not bombard at all and everybody will hate them and they did love the Americans but I said you know how they are here the French forget the past and enjoy the present yes they answer but our towns and all the dead, oh dear they say to me can you not stop them, alas I say I hate to have lovely places all smashed up and French people killed but what can I do, well they say, anyhow it is going on so long so long, and sometimes we that were most optimistic are getting kind of pessimistic it is going on so long.

In the 19th century

Stein, Wars, S. 10 (GS3)

There was nothing more interesting in the nineteenth century than little by little realising the detail of natural selection in insects flowers and birds and butterflies and comparing things and animals and noticing protective colouring nothing more interesting, and this made the nineteenth century what it is, the white man's burden, the gradual domination of the globe as piece by piece it became known and became all of a piece, and the hope of Esperanto or a universal language.

Here we can see every night
when the moon is bright

In the nineteenth century, there was reading, there was evolution, there were war and anti-war which were the same thing, and there was eating. Even now I always resent when in a book they say they sat down to a hearty meal and they do not tell just what it was they ate.

Here we can see every night
when the moon is bright
and even when it is not,
we cannot see them but we hear them, they hum and then from time to time they drop a light
and they give us all a very great deal of delight. And why.

Because they are going to drop bombs on the Italians. Anybody can like an Italian but just the same we can have a great deal of pleasure in hearing all these airplanes hum and see them drop lights on their way to bomb Italians. Why we all say do they not give in. Not so exciting perhaps but more useful, useful that is if you want to go on living in a country has not been overwhelmed by destruction.

Here we can see every night
when the moon is bright

Last night just before the airplanes came there was a complete eclipse of the moon, the shadow of the earth fell on the moon, none too soon and then slowly it passed away, it was very nice, but none of the newspapers and none of the radios mentioned it. Eclipses are an amusement for peace-time and yet all the same said my neighbour, she is a country-woman, it makes one think of all those worlds turning around and around. Yes I said it is more terrifying even than war. Yes she said.

And it was
twelve o'clock at night
and the moon was shining bright again
and we went to bed and a little after we heard the airplanes humming and we saw the lights dropping and then we shut out the moonlight and then we were sleeping. All this is an introduction to the nineteenth century feeling about science.

Stars are not really more than just what they look like. If they are then are they really realer than war. It is just that that makes the twentieth century, know what science teaches and whether it is or whether it is not what science teaches, since war is really and therefore it is what it is, that is everybody gets to meet anybody friends and enemies we have then now enemies in the house and in the barn, and it does not make any difference about the stars and it does not make any difference about war, only really it does make a difference about war seeing the trains pass with the enemy on them yes it does, but the stars whether they are what they look like or what science teaches, does it make any difference and anybody can answer that it does not.

Just like that

Stein, Wars, S. 105 (GS 18)

We spend our Friday afternoons with friends reading Shakespeare, we have read Julius Cæsar, and Macbeth and now Richard the Third and what is so terrifying is that it is all just like what is happening now. Macbeth seeing ghosts

well don't they,
is not Mussolini seeing the ghost of his son-in-law,
of course he is

you can see him seeing the ghost of his son-in-law, his last speech showed that he did, and any of them, take the kings in Shakespeare there is no reason why they all kill each other all the time, it is not like orderly wars when you meet and fight, but it is all just violence and there is no object to be attained, no glory to be won, just like Henry the Sixth and Richard the Third and Macbeth

just like that,
just like that,
very terrible
very very terrible
and just like that.

just like that

Coriolan

T.S.Eliot, Triumphal march I. Coriolan, aus: "The complete Poems and plays"

Stone,
bronze,
stone
steel,
stone,
oakleaves,
horses` heels
Over the paving.
And the flags.
And the trumpets.
And so many eagles.
How many?
Count them.
And such a press of people.
We hardly knew ourselves that day,
or
knew the City.
This is the way to the temple,
and we
so many crowding the way.
So many waiting,
how many waiting?
what did it matter, on such a day?
Are they coming?
No,
not yet.
You can see some eagles.
And hear the trumpets.
Is he coming?
We can wait with our stools and our sausages.

Here they come.
What comes first?
Can you see?
Tell us,

It is
5,800,000 rifles and carbines,
102,000 machine guns,
28,000 trench mortars,
53,000 field and heavy guns,
I cannot tell how many projectiles, mines and fuses,
13,000 aeroplanes,

24,000 aeroplane engines,
50,000 ammunition waggons,
now 55,000 army waggons,
11,000 field kitchens,
1,150 field bakeries.

What a time that took.
Will it be he now?
No,
Those are the golf club Captains,
these the Scouts,
And now société gymnastique de Poissy
And now come the Mayor and the Liverymen.

Look
:
There he is now,
look:
:
There is no interrogation in his eyes
Or in the hands, quiet over the horse`s neck,
And the eyes
watchful,
waiting,
perceiving,
indifferent.

Now
they go up to the temple.

Then
the sacrifice.

Now
come the virgins bearing urns,
urns containing

Dust
Dust
Dust of dust,
and now

Stone,
bronze,
stone,
steel,
stone,
oakleaves,
horses` heels
Over the paving.
That is all we could see.
But how many eagles!
and how many trumpets!
(And Easter Day, we didn`t get to the country,
So we took young Cyril to church. And they rang a bell
And he said right out loud, crumpets.)
Don`t throw away that sausage,

It'll come in handy.
He's artful.
 Please, will you
 Give us a light?
 Light
 Light
 Et les soldats faisaient la haie?
ILS LA FAISAIENT.

Homme-Bombe (Henri Michaux)

(Anfang fehlt noch!)

...

But it is high time that I should be silent. I have already said too much.
In writing, one exposes oneself absolutely beyond measure.
One more word and I would have tumbled head first into the truth.
Incidentally, I no longer kill. One gets tired of everything at some point. Another section of my life brought to conclusion. Now I will paint, colours are something beautiful when they come out of the tube like that, and sometimes for a bit longer. It looks like blood.

Schlachtbeschreibung

The way of representing a battle. First you must represent the smoke of artillery mingling in the air with the dust tossed up by the movement of horses and the combatants. And this mixture you must express thus: The dust, being a thing of earth, has weight; and although from its fineness it is easily tossed up and mingles with the air, it nevertheless readily falls again. The smoke will assume a bluish tinge and the dust will tend to its colour. The more the combatants are in this turmoil the less will they be seen, and the less contrast will there be in their lights and shadows. Their faces and figures and their appearance you must redden.

The air must be full of arrows in every direction, some shooting upwards, some flying level. The balls from the guns must have a train of smoke following their flight. Make also a horse dragging the dead body of his master, and leaving behind him, in the dust and mud, the track where the body was along.

You must scatter arms of all sorts among the feet of the combatants, as broken shields, lances, broken swords, and other such objects. And you must make the dead partly or entirely covered with dust.

You must make the conquered and beaten pale, their brows raised and knit and the skin above their brows furrowed with pain, and the lips arched upwards and discovering the upper teeth; and the teeth apart as with erylking out in lamentation. Others represent shouting with their mouths open, and running away.

Others must be represented in the agonies of death grinding their teeth, rolling their eyes, with their fists clenched against their bodies and their legs contorted. Their, again, might be seen a number of men fallen in a heap over a dead horse. You would see some of the victors

And there must not be a level spot that is not trampled with gore.

Did it really happen

Stein, Wars, S. 10 (GS3)

well anyway the nineteenth century liked to cry liked to try liked to eat liked to pursue evolution and liked war, war and peace peace and war and no more.

When I was then I liked revolutions I liked to eat I liked to eat I liked to cry not in real life but in books and in real life there was nothing much to cry about but in books oh dear me, it was wonderful there was so much to cry about and then there was evolution. Evolution was all over my childhood, walks abroad with an evolutionist and the world was full of evolution, biological and botanical evolution, with music as a background for emotion and books as a reality, and a great deal of fresh air as a necessity, and a great deal of eating as an excitement and as an orgy, and now well just then there was no war no actual war anywhere.

Stein, Wars, S.110 (GS 18)

Did it really happen, oh yes she said, it does happen and it did happen. Well so life goes on, we had just been reading Shakespeare Richard the Third, and and the things they say there do sound just like that, so why not, anything is so if the country makes it so, and a century makes it so when it is so, just like that. just like that.

history does repeat itself,
I have often thought that that was the really
soothing that history does.
The one thing that is sure and
certain is that history does not
teach, that is to say,
it always says let it be a lesson to you
but is it ?

Not at all

Not at all
because
circumstances always alter
cases and so
although history does repeat itself
it is only because the repetition
is soothing that
anyone believes it,

nobody

nobody wants to
learn either by their own or anybody
else's experience,
nobody does,
no
they say they do but no
nobody does.
Yes
nobody does.

You disappear

STEIN, WARS, S. 16 (GS4)

Mediæval means, that life and place and the crops you plant and your wife and children, all are uncertain. They can be driven away or taken away, or burned away, or left behind, that is what it is to be mediæval. And now and here 1943,

it is just like that,
/you take a train,
/you disappear,
/you move away
/your house is gone,
/your children too,
/your crops are taken away,
/there is nothing to say,
/you are on the road,
/and where are they,
/if you go
/there is nobody to say so,
/anything can come / and anything can go
/everything is all the same
/what can happen here
/can happen there,
/and what can happen there
/can happen anywhere
/and it does, - beside it does.
That was true in mediæval times too.

On the road

Stein, Wars, S. 69-70 (GS 10)

On the road I met a woman an oldish woman and we were going the same way and we talked as we walked. She said a little farther along she had a house but she did not live there. She had had a sister paralysed for thirtyfive years who had lived there and she died two years ago. She now lived with her brother-in-law somewhere else, he was all she had but of course some one stayed in the paternal house to take care of the children. Oh yes I forgot I had Basket on a leash because on the road as there is a cement works there are many trucks, of course there are quite a number of automobiles, no German ones, French ones the French always keep going somehow, well anyway I said I had Basket on a leash because he having worms was a little nervous he almost was run down by an automobile, so I told her and I said a dog is so easily killed, yes she said we had one at the paternal house and he went blind and so we had to have him killed, and I said we had a little dog we loved very much and he had to be killed because he had diabetes, and is he dead she said and I said yes, and she said it is different with chickens, she said just the other day a camion came along and he ran over one of our chickens and he did not notice it he just went on but a little later another one came along and he noticed it and he stopped and got down and gathered in the chicken and went on, just then my nephew came out and saw him and as he went away he noticed the number so a little later when the camion came back again my nephew stopped him and said you

have to pay me for that chicken that is to say not money I do not want money I want the chicken, and the man said not at all I will pay you but I will not give you the chicken and my nephew said he did not want payment he wanted the chicken and the man said he did not have it which was probably a lie but still perhaps he had already eaten it, but anyway my nephew said well I will take the money, no said the other I am not paying you anything, why not said my nephew, because I am not said the driver and my nephew said well suppose you give it to the Red Cross to make a package for a prisoner not at all said the driver and he drove away and said I what did your nephew do, I have no nephew she said I only have a niece that is to say I only have a father-in-law, that is not my house where I live it belongs to my brother-in-law and just then our roads parted and we said good-bye.

On the radio

Stein, Wars, S. 79 (GS 12)

Everything is dangerous and everybody casually meeting anybody talks to anybody and everybody tells everybody the history of their lives, they are always telling me and I am always telling them and so is everybody, that is the way it is when everything is dangerous.

Life and death and death and life. Life and death and death and life. Life and death and death and life.

Stein, Wars, S. 105 (GS 18)

That is what makes it so extraordinary, everybody listens to the radio, they listen all day long because almost everybody has one and if not there is their neighbour's and they listen to the voice from any country and yet what they really believe is not what they hear but the rumours in the town, by word of mouth is always the most convincing, they do not believe the newspapers nor the radio but they do believe what they tell each other and that is natural enough, all official news is so deceiving, so why not believe rumours, that is reasonable enough, and so they do, they believe all the rumours, and even when they know they are not true they believe them, at any rate they have a chance of being true rumours have but official news has no chance of being true none at all, of course not.

Stein, Wars, S. 10 (GS 3)

Now they can do the radio in so many languages that nobody any longer dreams of a single language, and there should not any longer be dreams of conquest because the globe is all one, anybody can hear everything and everybody can hear the same thing, so what is the use of conquering, and so the nineteenth century now in '43 is slowly coming to an end.

So they go on, and all the radio stations interfere so that nobody can hear any one and in the midst of all the misery it is not childish but very small boyish. It is strange the world to-day is not adult it has the mental development of a seven-year-old boy just about that. Dear me.

Stein, Wars, S.101-102 (GS 16)

and anyway it is evening and nearly midnight and I will be listening to the last news just before going to bed again. It is funny the different nations begin their broadcasting I wish I knew more languages so that I could know how each one of them does it. The English always begin with this is London, or the B.B.C. home service, or the overseas service. The Americans say with poetry and fire, this is the voice of America, one of the United Nations, speaking to you across the Atlantic. Then the Frenchmen, say Frenchmen speaking to Frenchmen, they always begin like that, and the Belgians are simple and direct, they just announce, radio Belge, and the national anthem, and the Swiss so politely say, the studio of Geneva, at the instant of the broadcasting station of Berne will give you the latest news, and Italy says live Mussolini live Italy, and they make a bird noise and then they start, and Germany starts like this, Germany calling, Germany calling, in the last war, I said that the camouflage was the distinctive characteristic of each country, each nation stamped itself upon its camouflage, but in this war it is the heading of the broadcast that makes national life so complete and determined. It is that a nation is even stronger than the personality of any one, it certainly is so nations must go on, they certainly must.

Out Where the West Begins

: Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts in despair are breaking,
 That's where the West begins.
Where's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where's more of giving and less of buying,
And a man makes friends without half trying--
 Out where the West begins.

Out where the handclasp's a little stronger,
Out where the smile dwells a little longer,
 That's where the West begins;
Out where the sun is a little brighter,
Out where the snows are a trifle whiter,
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,
 Out where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,
Out where the friendship's a little truer,
 That's where the West begins.
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Out where there's laughter in streamlets flowing,
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,
 Out where the West begins.

Train Travelling

G.Stein, War I have seen

But to get back to train travelling more and more I like to take a train I understand why the French prefer it to automobiling, it is so much more sociable and of course these days so much more of an adventure, and the irregularity of its regularity is fascinating.

As I said we were going to Chambery and we got ready and got to the station well ahead of time as is our custom and with all our papers in order as our custom.

When we arrived at the station of course the train was not there it never is and we had a long conversation with our friend the gendarme who helps us get around and helps us get a goat, and helped us every way they help anybody every day often to get away, they do do that.

Freight train

: Freight train, freight train goin' so fast.
Freight train, freight train goin' so fast.
Please, don't tell what train I'm on,
so they won't know where I'm gone.

When I die, Lord, please bury me deep,
Way down on old Chestnut Street,

So I can hear old Number Nine
As she comes a-rolling by.

Freight train, freight train ...

When I am dead and in my grave,
No more good times here I'll crave,
Place the stones at my head and feet
And tell them all that I'm gone to sleep.