THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES

[Greek text inserted here]
Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.
The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.
Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees
Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-cup,
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;
The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;
The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rachel née Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;
She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,
Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wisteria
Circumscribe a golden grin;
The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,
And sang within the bloody wood

When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid droppings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.