



This Wasted Land: and Its Chymical Illuminations

Marc Vincenz, Tom Bradley

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Marc Vincenz has achieved the virtuosic feat of rendering homage to *The Waste Land* while simultaneously engendering a love epic of nine hundred lines. Vincenz enters and plunders the minds of Alexandrian gnostics, Celtic Druids, medieval alchemists, magi if the Iranian Plateau, and tantric adepts of the Indus Valley.

Meanwhile, Tom Bradley has annotated this book in the strange way he did *Epigonesia* and *Felicia's Nose*. He strip-mines the pseudepigrapha and snuffles into Mariolatry's odd pastel nooks, where the sense of smell prevails over all others. As a precaution, Bradley doesn't neglect to conjure the crone initiatrix of the Vama Marga who teaches prophets, seers and revelators to control their gag reflex. Gradually, something like a novel materializes among the endnotes. A strange figure emerges: Siegfried Tolliot, who, in 1958, shared intimacy with Ezra Pound at Saint Elizabeth's insane asylum in Washington, D. C.

The result is that rarity of rarities: a new genre, situated in real time as the poet's bright lyricism contends with the cackling paranoia of his annotator. It all culminates in a 300-item bibliography and an index of 900 entries, citing everyone from Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa to Zosimos of Panopolis.

Praise for This Wasted Land

Nothing like it. A transcendence. Completely novel. Will be remembered forever. And that is an understatement. I didn't think giants still walked the earth. I know about comedy, wit, multiple allusions... but I didn't think anyone was still around who could do what Vincenz and Bradley did in *This Wasted Land*... delight after delight...

—Joe Green, author of *The Limerick Homer*

A palatial homage to Eliot; ludic cruise through Pound's errata. Ideally epic, *This Wasted Land* preens and pummels conceptual imagery into a sacred profane realization of feminine figure manifesting appearances in a spindle of eras. The letter leaves no wand unwaved, no veil unraised, no, the fearless love song curiously transfigures her extreme essences throughout time. This is transnational and transcontinental muse. A meditative investigation with rare sourcing, scat. Instead of the traditional, Vincenz rips it up with careening force, rhythmic gales unleashing the unexpected. Freely loosening rodents, pestilence, while he borrows the familiar beautiful, iconic then couples comfort with foul, casts off ashen and machinated debris, all the while experimenting his way through encoded episodic verse, gaining poetic perversity in annotated wanderlust, and topsy turvy embrace. This isn't the love song we thought we came for—it's the chase. Bradley's multilayered, alchemical annotations, anchor this book—the poem, the notes, the expansive bibliography – deliver a rare multiverse of a read. Phenomenal, scintillating.

—Allison Hedge Coke, Winner of the American Book Award and author of Blood Run

From 'the dimness of that Portobello antique shop' to 'purple-haired Cornish coach tourists', from 'laminated tabletops and the mountain ranges beyond Chengdu' to 'those gondalieri, wild ones with their coppery manes', Marc Vincenz conjures, with ostensible effortlessness, memories one is aghast to realize one scarcely knew were there, rather in the manner (however unlikely the comparison) of Somerset Maugham's *The Moon and Sixpence*. Playful but pensive incongruities—a 'judicial right of crenellation', the flick of a stub to the floor, 'disgusted at the lack of ashtrays'—do that rare thing of poetry responsibly riddling the

reader. Tom Bradley's copious and critical annotations give us the capricious erudition of a T. S. Eliot in March Hare guise, whilst delivering such mirthfulness as would befit Boccaccio. In Vincenz's own words, 'the mind reels, tied to a mast, the heart burns, roped up.'

—**Umit Singh Dhuga**, The Battersea Review



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