

## **The Journey of the Magi**

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**"A cold coming we had of it,**

**Just the worst time of the year**

**For a journey, and such a long journey:**

**The ways deep and the weather sharp,**

**The very dead of winter."**

**And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,**

**Lying down in the melting snow.**

**There were times we regretted**

**The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,**

**And the silken girls bringing sherbet.**

**Then the camel men cursing and grumbling**

**And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,**

**And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,**

**And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly**

**And the villages dirty, and charging high prices.:**

**A hard time we had of it.**

**At the end we preferred to travel all night,**

**Sleeping in snatches,**

**With the voices singing in our ears, saying**

**That this was all folly.**

**Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,**

**Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;**

**With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,**

**And three trees on the low sky,**

**And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.**

**Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,**

**Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,**

**And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.**

**But there was no information, and so we continued**

**And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon**

**Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.**

**All this was a long time ago, I remember,**

**And I would do it again, but set down**

**This set down**

**This: were we lead all that way for**

**Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,**

**We had evidence and no doubt. I have seen birth and death,**

**But had thought they were different; this Birth was**

**Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.**

**We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,**

**But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,**

**With an alien people clutching their gods.**

**I should be glad of another death.**

T.S. Eliot