

JIAP OBSERVATION

APRIL IS THE CRUELLEST MONTH

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What TS Eliot knew about the Japanese economy:

The Wasteland

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

AFTER the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and place and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience

And it is little patience that the Japanese people are watching their national economy wilt. Koizumi has demonstrated that he was not the hoped for savior. Instead, he is just another machine politician, a simple-minded fop at that. Disappointment is fast turning to scorn.

A fiction believed by both Japan's elites and their American interlocutors is that Japanese public opinion is fickle and easy to influence. Even 50 years of hesitant democracy has not changed this elite belief. Unfortunately, for Koizumi public opinion now does matter and does not easily turn on a leader's whim. New laws and new votes are proving daily that the Japanese public is increasingly important.

Koizumi's and the LDP used public opinion to gain power. Their mistake was that they thought that they could take it for granted or even harness it at will. Those days are over. **Memory and desire are stirring among the Japanese people.**

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