

T.S. Eliot



Four Quartets: IV Little Gidding (15th Oct. 1942):

“the end is where we start from” V

The power of the poetry is such that we cannot rest until we have both “experience” and “meaning”. And it is the arriving at the meaning, not the explaining of it, that matters. Anyone who attempts to ‘elucidate’ *Four Quartets* must be aware that the poems themselves supply the light.

“Words, after speech, reach into the silence” *Burnt Norton*

- Raymond Preston, *‘Four Quartets’ Rehearsed: A Commentary on T.S. Eliot’s Cycle of Poems* (1946).
Quoted in *Reading T.S. Eliot*, G. Douglas Atkins, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012
- Christopher Ricks & Jim McCue (eds), *The Annotated Text, The Poems of T.S. Eliot* (2 Vols), Faber & Faber, London, 2015
- Kenneth Paul Kramer, *Redeeming Time: T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets*, Cowley, Plymouth, 2007
- Herman Servotte and Ethel Grene, *Annotations to T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets*, iUniverse, Bloomington, 2010
- A.L. Maycock, *Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding*, Erdmans, Grand Rapids, 1938
- The Friends of Little Gidding, *Little Gidding an Illustrated History and Guide*, Strathmore, London, 2006



THIS IS NONE
HOUSE OF GOD & THE

OTHER BUT THE
GATE OF HEAVEN



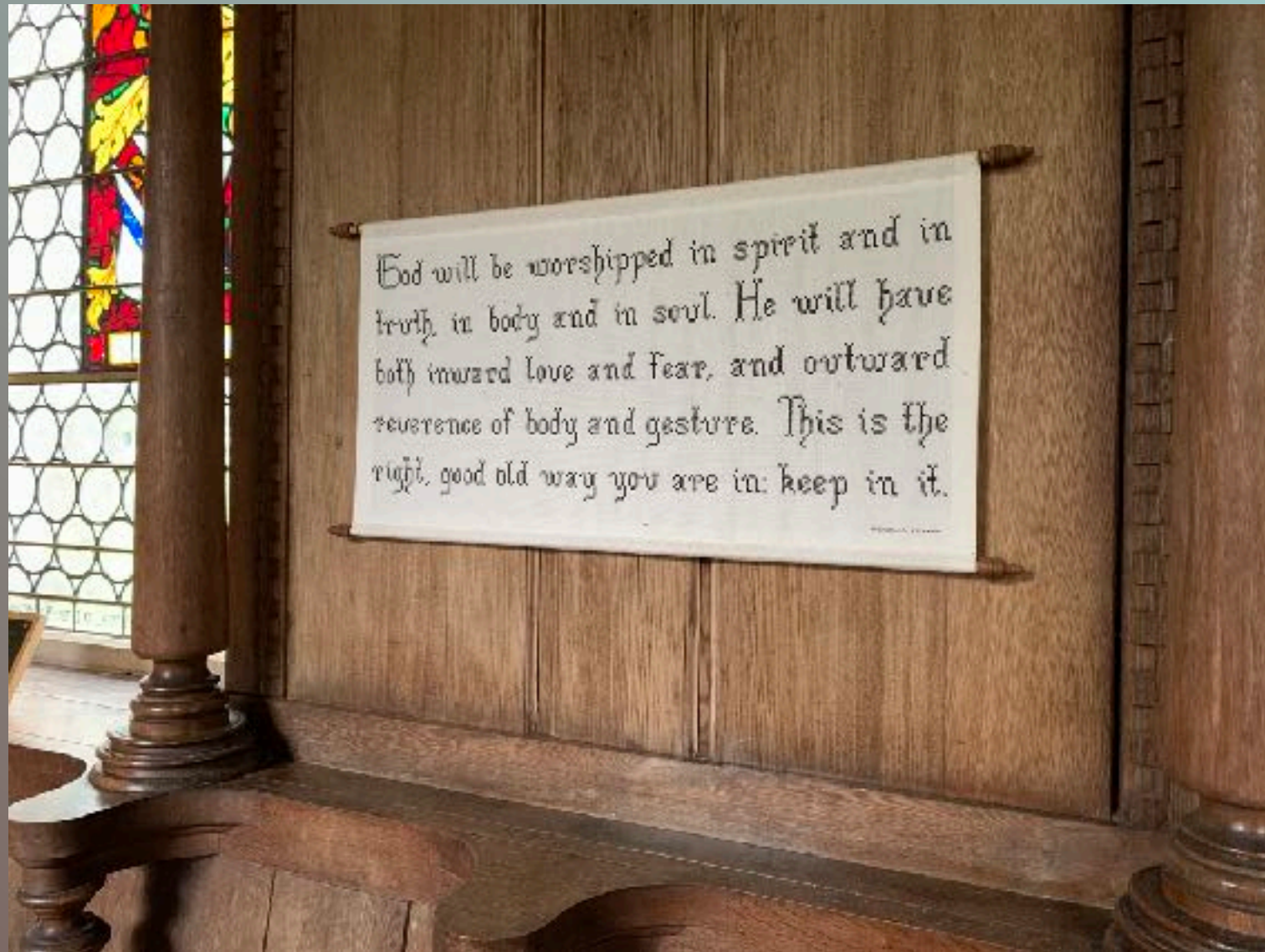




“Words, after speech, reach into the silence” *Burnt Norton*

- Eliot’s urge to write poetry that transcended itself; he aimed:
- “to write poetry which should be essentially poetry, with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, or poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry, poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem points at, and not on the poetry, this seems to me the thing to try for. To get beyond poetry, as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music.”
- Unpublished lecture “English Letter Writers” quoted in Kramer

Some of the key influences on *Little Gidding*



- The example of Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding and his family: see Ricks 989.



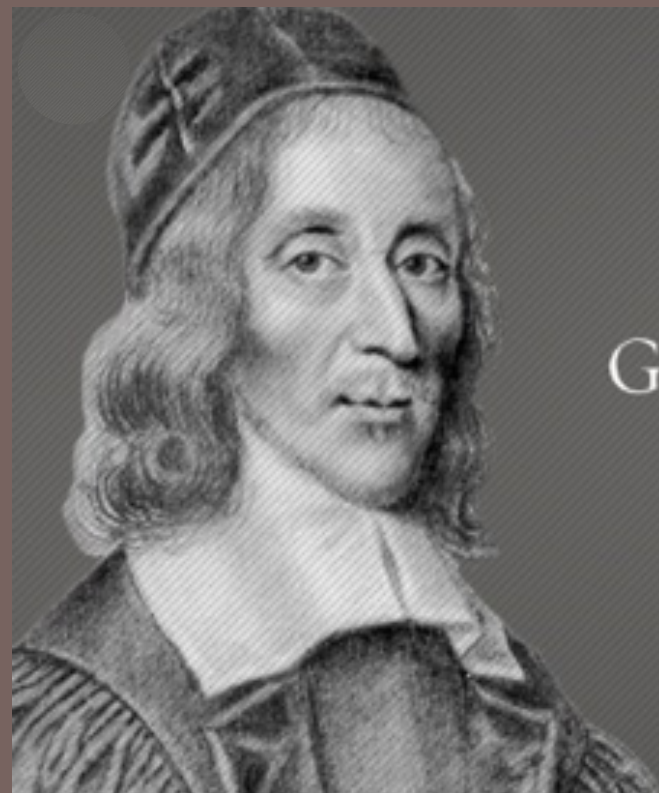


George Herbert

- T.S. Eliot in a 1938 Lecture on George Herbert:

“What is relevant is all there, and we do not ask to know more of him [Herbert] than what is conveyed in his utterance of his meditations on the highest spiritual mysteries. Within his limits, therefore, he achieves the greatest universality in his art; he remains as the human soul contemplating on the divine.”

Bitter-sweet
Ah my dear angry Lord,
Since thou dost love, yet strike;
Cast down, yet help afford;
Sore I will do the like.
I will complain, yet praise;
I will bewail, approve;
And all my sore-sweet days
I will lament, and love.



GEORGE HERBERT
1593–1633



- Fourteenth century English mystics: Julian of Norwich and the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*:
- Cloud “A weary and wretched heart, indeed, is one fast asleep in sloth, which is not awakened by the drawing power of his love and the voice of his calling”
- Julian “And all shall be well and / All manner of things shall be well..... “
- Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*. Virginia Woolf once asked Eliot what he experience when praying. In response he “described the attempt to concentrate, to forget self, to attain union with God.” Stephen Spender “Remembering Eliot” in *T.S.Eliot: the Man and His Work*, 59.



**If you came this way,
Taking the route you would be likely to take
From the place you would be likely to come....
If you came by day not knowing what you came for,
It would be the same, when you leave the rough road**

**And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull facade
And the tombstone. And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all.**



T.S. Eliot 1888-1965

Four Quartets		
<i>Burnt Norton</i> (1935)	Air	Our First World
<i>East Coker</i> (1940)	Earth	The Old World
<i>The Dry Salvages</i> (1941)	Water	The New World
<i>Little Gidding</i> (1942)	Fire	Between Two Worlds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga8tQrG4ZSw>

39.05



Sequential Pattern					
	I	II	III	IV	V
BN: (Air)	Lotos Rose	Still Point	Descend Lower	Kingfisher's Wing	The Co- existence
EC: (Earth)	Open Field	Wisdom of Humility	Be Still	Wounded Surgeon	Union and Communion
DS: (Water)	River and Sea	Sudden Illumination	Fare Forward	Queen of Heaven	Impossible Union
LG: (Fire)	Tongued with Fire	Compound Ghost	Purify the Motive	Pyre or Pyre	Dancing Together

4 ways:

the way of darkness,

the way of stillness,

the way of yogic
action,

the way of
purification

Key theme through all the *Four Quartets*: the redemptive significance of timeless moments, rather than something known, is a new way of knowing, a “new innocence”.
Kramer

Contemplative Pattern in *Four Quartets*

PREPARATORY RECOLLECTIONS

First Movement Landscape Meditation

Composition of Place

Second Movement Temporal Illumination

Interior Geography of Soul

INTERIOR QUIETUDE

Third Movement Spiritual Direction

Via Negativa / Positiva

Fourth Movement Purification

Via Purgativa

UNITIVE CONTEMPLATION

Fifth Movement Reconciliation

Middle Way Immediacy

Theme Words

FOUR QUARTETS	Preparatory Recollections	Interior Quietude	Unitive Contemplation
BURNT NORTON	I. Lotos Rose	III. Descend Lower	V. The Co-existence
	II. Still Point	IV. Kingfisher's Wing	
EAST COKER	I. Open Field	III. Be Still	V. Union and Communion
	II. Wisdom of Humility	IV. Wounded Surgeon	
THE DRY SALVAGES	I. River and Sea	III. Fare Forward	V. Impossible Union
	II. Sudden Illumination	IV. Queen of Heaven	
LITTLE GIDDING	I. Tongued with Fire	III. Purify the Motive	V. Dancing Together
	II. Compound Ghost	IV. Pyre or Pyre	



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39.05



What we call the beginning is often the end
 And to make an end is to make a beginning.
 The end is where we start from. And every phrase *large*
 And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
 Taking its place to support the others,
 The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
 In easy commerce of the old and the new,
 The common word exact without vulgarity,
 The formal word precise but not pedantic,
 The complete consort dancing together) ✓
 Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
 Every poem an epitaph. And any action
 Step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat
 To an illegible stone: and that is where we start.
 Lie with the dying:
 They depart, and we go with them.
 We born with the dead: ✓
 They return, and bring us with them.
 The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree
 Of equal duration. A people without history
 Redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
 Of less moments. So, while the light fails
 Winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
 Of this now and England. ✓

With the drawing of this
 Calling

We shall not cease from
 And the end of all our exp
 Will be to arrive where v
 And know the place for t
 Through the unknown,
 When the last of earth l
 Is that which was the b
 At the source of the lo
 The voice of the hidd
 And the children in t
 Not known, because
 But heard, half-hear
 Between two wave
 Quick now, here,
 A condition of cor
 (Costing not less
 And all shall be v
 All manner of th
 When the tong
 Into the crown
 And the fire ar





WHEN I LEFT MY BODY
ON A DISTANT

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.

An easy commerce of the old and new...

At the recurrent end of the unending
After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
Had passed below the horizon of his homing
While the dead leaves still rattled like tin...

It would be the same at the end of the journey,
If you came at night like a broken king...

here you must move in measure, like a dancer.

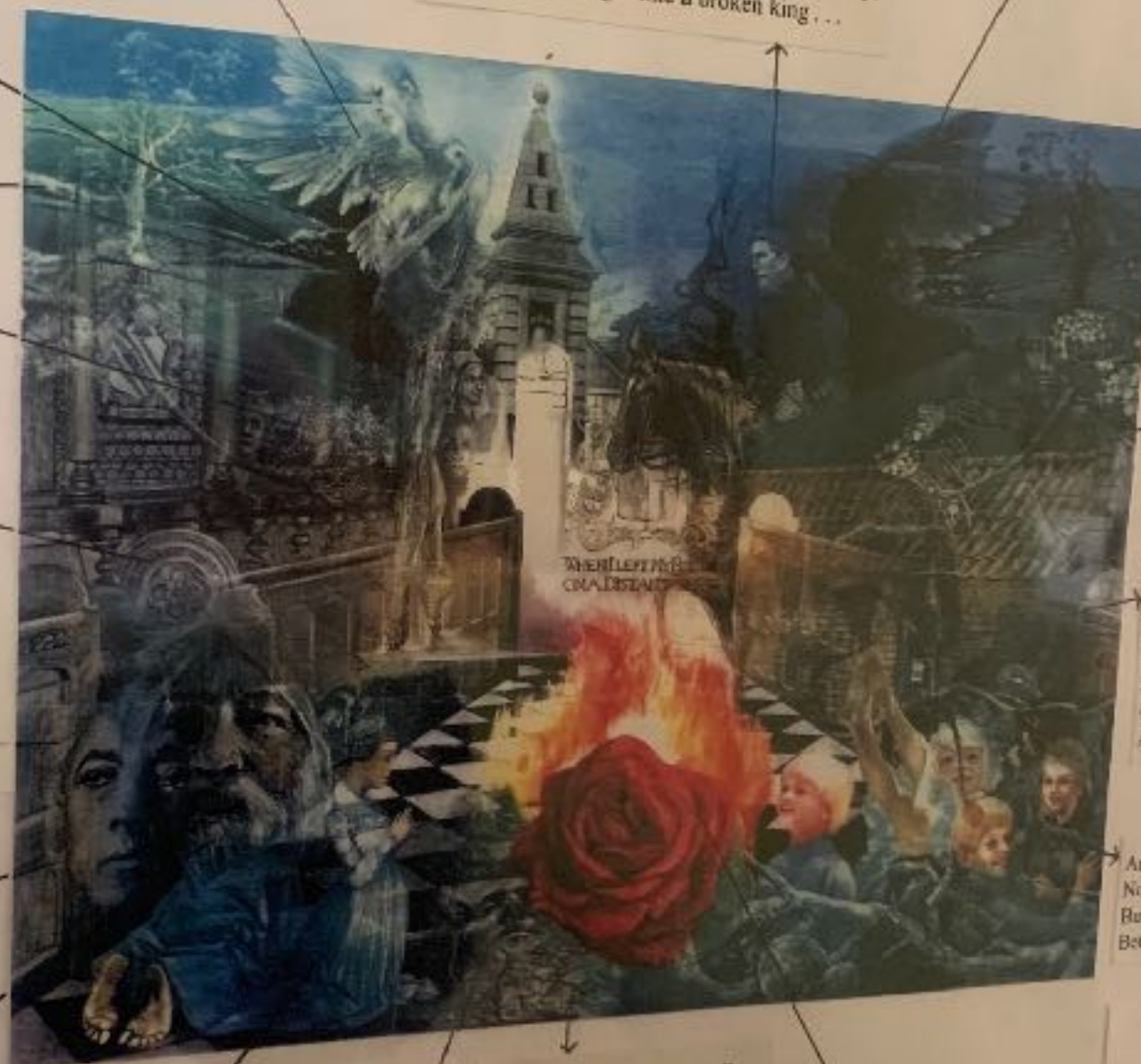
Now the hedgerow
blanched for an hour with transitory blossom
of snow, a bloom more sudden
than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,
not in the scheme of generation.

And the tombstone.

And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the
language of the living.

I caught the sudden look of some dead master
Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled
Both one and many; in the brown baked features

And he a face still forming; yet the words sufficed
to compel the recognition they preceded.



If you came this way,
Taking the route you would be likely to take
From the place you would be likely to come from,
If you came this way in May time, you would find the hedges
White again, in May, with voluptuous sweetness.

Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and, growing
between them, indifference...

And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull facade...
And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment.

And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.

The parched eviscerate soil...

The death of hope and despair,
This is the death of air.

And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

Spot the difference!

The two left and right hand children's faces
on this 'key' do not appear on the finished
manuscript. There may be other differences
as yet unnoticed.

You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.



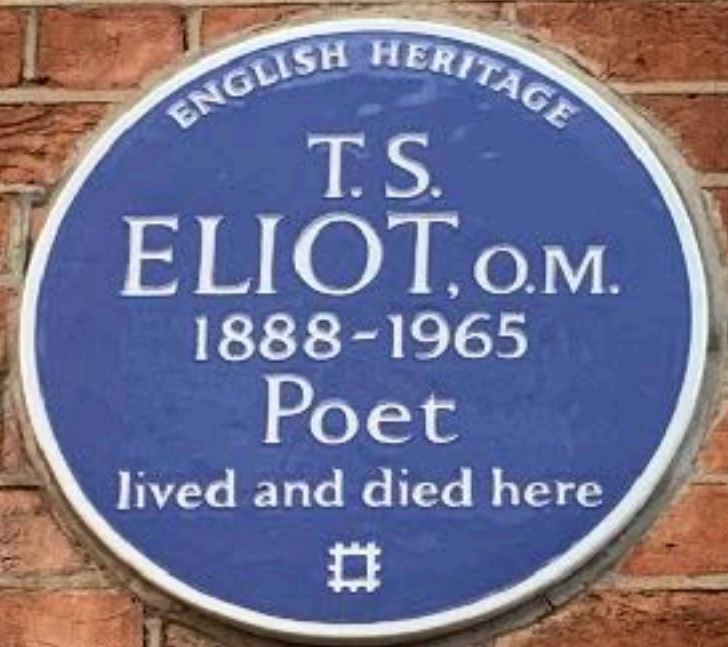




ES
ELIOT 1894-1995
Poet
12

KENSINGTON
COURT
GARDENS
1 to 14a

KENSINGTON
COURT
GARDENS
1 to 14a



ENGLISH HERITAGE
T.S.
ELIOT, O.M.
1888-1965
Poet
lived and died here
🏠

The Royal Borough of Kensington
GLOUCESTER
ROAD, S.W.7.

15
DA MARIO

15



The Royal Borough of Kensington
and Chelsea
CROMWELL
ROAD, S.W.7





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SOLEMN MASS 11 AM

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