

The Voices of Silence: Meditations on T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets

J. C. Woods

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T. S. Eliot had moved on to Drama and was uncertain whether he would ever write poetry again, but some lines he had cut from his first play, Murder in the Cathedral, stuck in his imagination. They became seeds. And, in the tumult preceding the Second World War, the seeds began to sprout. This was the genesis of Eliot's final suite of poems, the Four Quartets. Each poem saw separate publication before they were bound together into a single unit. There are four poems: one for each of the base elements of physical reality air, earth, water and fire. Each poem is connected to a place the poet revisits in memory: Burnt Norton, East Coker, The Dry Salvage and Little Gidding. As a whole it constitutes a brilliant meditation on time, eternity and those timeless moments when the two intersect. Eliot is a notoriously difficult poet, known for his wide allusions to the entire of the European poetic canon. In this poem he also alludes to the ancient scriptures of India. Luckily, Father Woods is available as tour guide, to lead you profitably through this literary adventure. Show more

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