

*“There is at present no twentieth-century poem that means more to me than Four Quartets. I know it by heart and it remains a vital influence on my life and on my work. It moves me physically, violently, often, and difficultly. Eliot is a difficult poet, not an obscure or unemotional poet, but a writer who demands that every word be charged.*

*Charge: To load, to put something into, to fill completely, to cause to accumulate electricity, to lay a task upon, to enjoin, to command, to deliver an official injunction or exhortation. To accuse. To place a bearing upon, to exactor demand from, to ask the price. To attack at a rush; the load of powder. A device born on a shield. The object of care.*

*All these things each word does, each word is, in his best work. Four Quartets is his best work, and for Eliot, work is not a noun, it is a verb. The active poem needs an active reader.”*

From J. WINTERSON, *Art Objects. Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, 1995