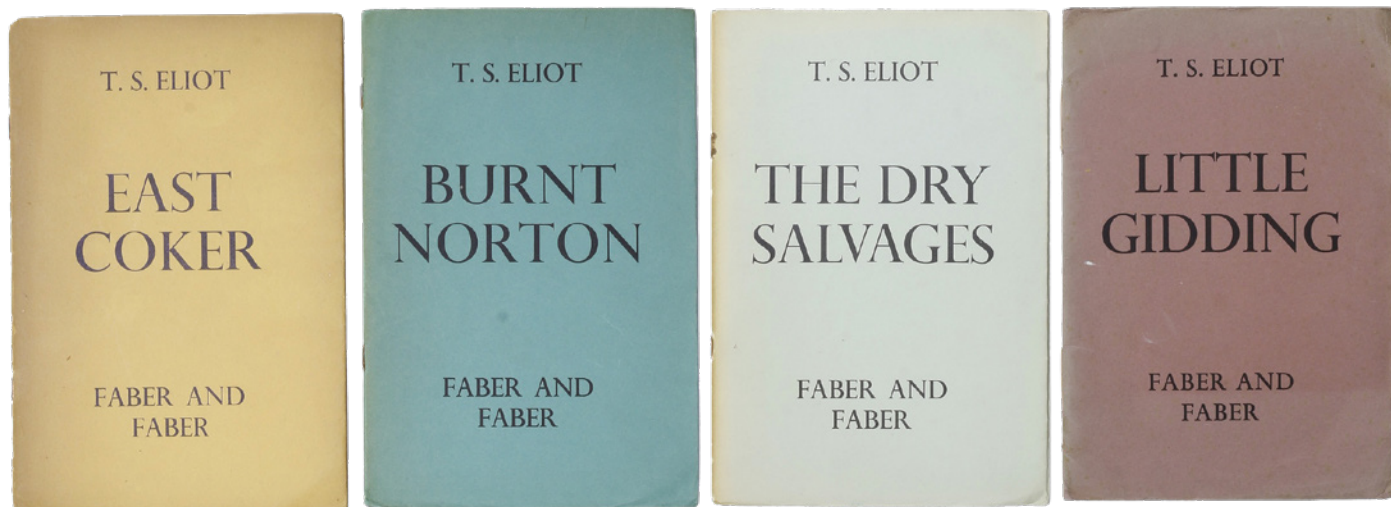


Know the Place for the First Time



The original Faber and Faber pamphlet editions of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*: *East Coker* (1940), *Burnt Norton* (1941), *The Dry Salvages* (1941), and *Little Gidding* (1942). The quartets were published individually before being collected into a single volume in 1943.

Aaron Fagan, Senior Editor

I've been reading T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* for most of my adult life. My relationship to it has evolved the way great long friendships do. There are years I stay in touch and years I drift away. When I come back, the poem hasn't changed, but I have. Different passages come in and out of focus depending on where I am in my life and the day I am reading. A line near the end of "Little Gidding," the last of the quartets, summarizes this sustained experience of the poem itself: *We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time.*

In the beginning, I read that—limited to an intellectual understanding—as a statement about the nature of wisdom, but now I understand it otherwise, more in practical terms. It's about the difference between looking at something and looking at something and actually seeing it. You can experience something for years, and then a shift in method or attention or necessity makes the whole thing legible in a way it wasn't before.

I recently had the good fortune to drive down to Lufkin, TX, and spend a morning with Scott Franks at Luftex. Part of the article that came out of that discussion tells a story about a steel plant with a recurring gear failure that nobody could diagnose. While the gears rated fine and the housing checked out, everything that should have explained the problem didn't. What he eventually found had been sitting in plain sight the whole time, and once you hear it, you'll wonder how anyone missed it. See p. 18 to hear him tell it.

Groß and Schmidt (p. 22) aimed three different measuring systems at the same tooth flank and discovered that what you see depends, both literally and figuratively, on how you look. The tactile instruments and the optical fringe projector agreed in some places and disagreed in others. The same surface reveals different information. It's not that one system was wrong. Each one was seeing a version of the truth shaped by its own physics.

Berger (p. 41) went back to a gear body stiffness method that's been in use since 1953, a formulation so established it lives inside ISO standards, and found that it produces the wrong trend when applied to face gears. There was nothing wrong with the math. It was designed for cylindrical gears, not to describe a face gear. He swapped the geometric model, and the answer reversed.

Even the CTI Symposium coverage (p. 20) reads this way. Micky Bly from Stellantis came back from visiting automotive plants in Asia and told a room full of powertrain engineers that the competition isn't what they thought it was. The threat was there before Bly went to look at it. He just went and looked.

I don't have a grand theory about any of this. But the people in these pages share a common bond: nobody found something that wasn't there before; they went back to something familiar and finally saw what it had been trying to show them.