



## **An invitation to meet**



### *An evening with poet and musician **Lord Gawain Douglas***

*On T.S. Eliot, his life and what Eliot's poetry means to him.*

*Gawain gives a full, unscripted and dramatised recital of *The Waste Land* and other favourite works as well as providing an introduction to Eliot's masterpiece  
Gawain's wife Nicolette, an accomplished pianist, provides the musical interludes*

*The Calder Bookshop and Theatre, The Cut, Waterloo.*

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November from 7pm**

*American born Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888 –1965) is a major figure in English literature both as poet and publisher. Only last week to mark National Poetry Day, he was voted the nation's favourite poet by BBC viewers and listeners. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, and educated at Harvard, the Sorbonne and Merton College, Oxford, he settled in England in 1917. Feeling that he would never succeed as a professional writer he took a day job at Lloyds Bank in Lombard Street, to the dismay of his friend, the writer and editor Ezra Pound.*

*Cont/-*

*He was later to comment that ‘this employment was the worst waste in contemporary literature.’ But Eliot had other ideas – he needed the formal 9.30-5.30 to put him in the frame of mind to produce poetry. And produce poetry he did. Among his other best-known works are ‘The Love Song of Alfred J Prufrock’ (1917) The Four Quartets (1943) and not forgetting Old Possums Book of Practical Cats, on which the musical Cats was based and which brought Eliot to a new and larger audience.*

*The Waste Land is one of the most important and influential poems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hailed as the voice of a despairing post-war generation. It also draws images from Eliot’s early years working for Lloyd Bank. When it was published in the 1920’s, it broke barriers in people’s minds and freed them to understand poetry in a different way; his ‘new poetry’ represented a break from the past. It is even more relevant today. Gawain will explain why the critics of the time didn’t know whether to condemn nor praise for they were dumbfounded: why the university students loved it and heard the music beneath the complexity. Eliot has always had a great influence on the young. Evelyn Waugh paid tribute to the poet in a university scene in Brideshead Revisited.*

*“The Waste Land is close to where I live in Deal” explains Gawain, “and the fifty lines beginning ‘The River sweats oil and tar’ were written while Eliot was sitting in a shelter on Margate seafront, no doubt in the teeth of the north wind, with his hat pulled down and his collar pulled up. He and his first wife Vivienne had gone to stay in Cliftonville to begin his recovery from mental breakdown ‘On Margate sands’ he wrote ‘I can connect nothing with nothing,’ A feeling many of us can relate to.”*

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**Reception with wine canapés & performance**

**Members: £29.50 Guests £35.50**

*or*

*To include 2 course dinner with wine coffee & mints at La Barca Restaurant afterwards*

**Members £62.50 (5%disc for couples) Guests £72.50**

## **The Calder Bookshop**

**Now in his 80s, as a young publisher John Calder knew T.S. Eliot when he was director of Faber and Faber. Close friend of Samuel Becket and publisher of many of Becket’s best known works, Calder is almost a living legend within the heady world of literature. Calder himself gives regular readings to a loyal and passionate audience.**

RSVP

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 Please detach & return

**REPLY SLIP**

**The Living Literature Society, Clarendon House, Shenley Road, Elstree, Herts WD6 1AG**

**Tel 01727 825 939 [diane.walters@storylinejourneys.co.uk](mailto:diane.walters@storylinejourneys.co.uk)**

***I attach my cheque for £.....in favour of Lamb B D (LLS) (please note payee)***

*Please reserve.....Member’s places. ....Guest places for an Evening with Lord Gawain Douglas on T.S. Eliot Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Please reserve.....places for dinner*

Name.....

Address.....

Tel... ..Email... ..