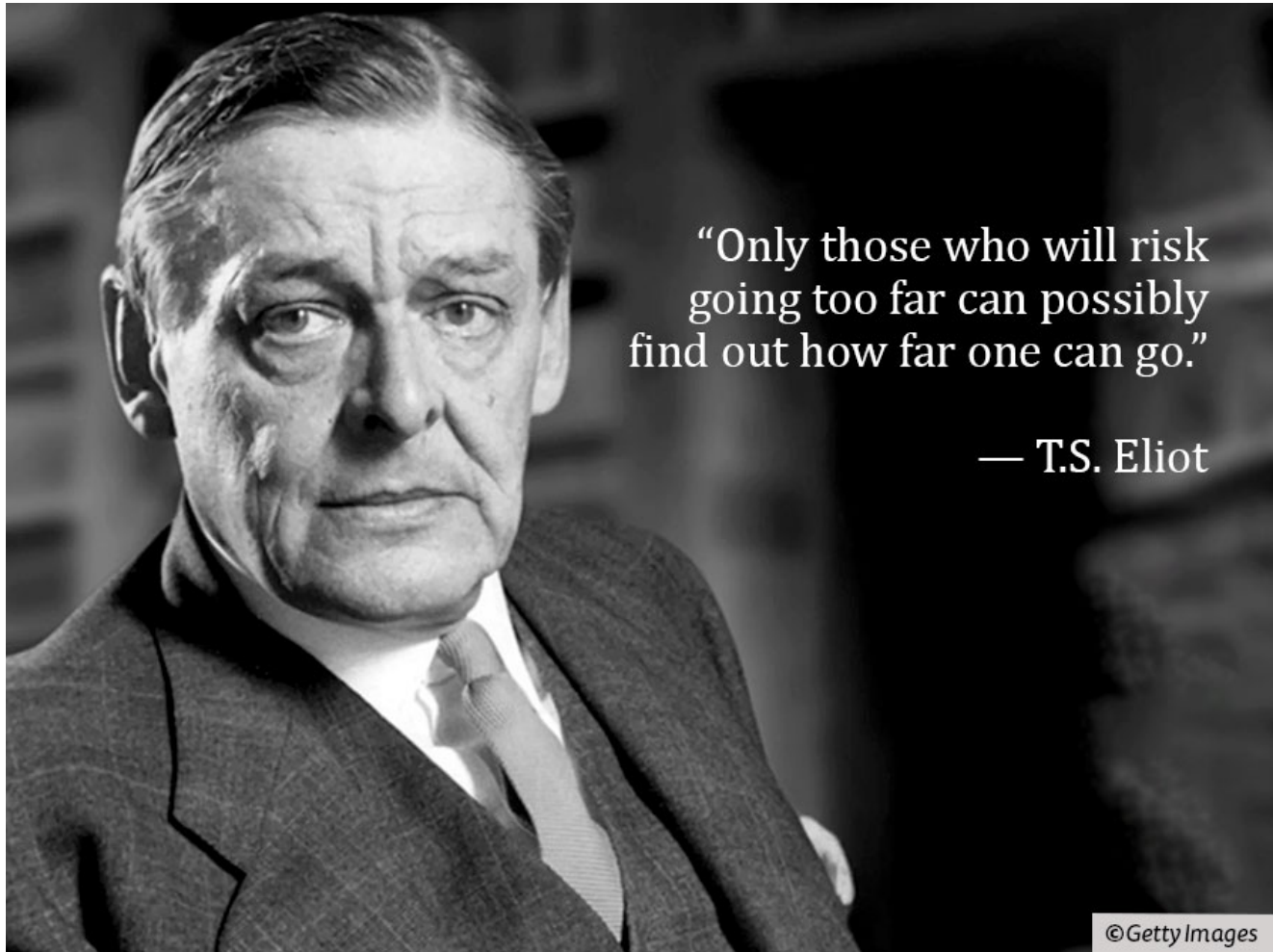


One hundred years of TS Eliot's primal scream

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*Cry for help? In happier times, TS Eliot described *The Waste Land* as "just a piece of rhythmical grumbling".*

Is *The Waste Land* the greatest modern poem? TS Eliot's poem about London after World War One is 100 years old this month. It has been read by millions across the world.

What's happening?

"IMMENSE. MAGNIFICENT. TERRIBLE." These are the words poet John Peale Bishop used when he read *The Waste Land* by TS Eliot. This autumn, the poem is 100 years old.

Find out more

The Waste Land was published in 1922. It quickly became a huge success. People around the world read the poem and quoted it.

The poem describes London after **World War One**. It is a poem about loss and loneliness and fear.

One hundred years on, many people still love reading *The Waste Land*. This month, there will be public readings all over the world and a new app has even been released to help people explore the poem. Many say Eliot's words still help them with their feelings today.

But others think *The Waste Land* is too **complicated**. It is 434 lines long and mentions both **ancient** Greek and Roman poets.

Is *The Waste Land* the greatest modern poem?

Some say

Yes! Eliot managed to express the emotions of millions. It is a poem that is still loved today.

Others think

No! Great poems should speak to everyone. Eliot's poem is only understood by some people, not everyone.

Some people say

"To do the useful thing, to say the courageous thing, to contemplate the beautiful thing: that is enough for one man's life."

TS Eliot (1888 – 1965), American poet and literary critic

Empty heading

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Do you like to read poetry? Why or why not?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: What is a great poem? What is the point of poetry?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure from the story above.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - What do you think is the greatest modern poem, and why?

5. Express

What do others believe? - In his poem, Eliot writes "April is the cruellest month." Do you agree? Discuss as a class.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Write your own poem about your feelings.

Glossary

World War One - A war that included many European countries between 1914 and 1918.

Complicated - Difficult.

Ancient - Very old.