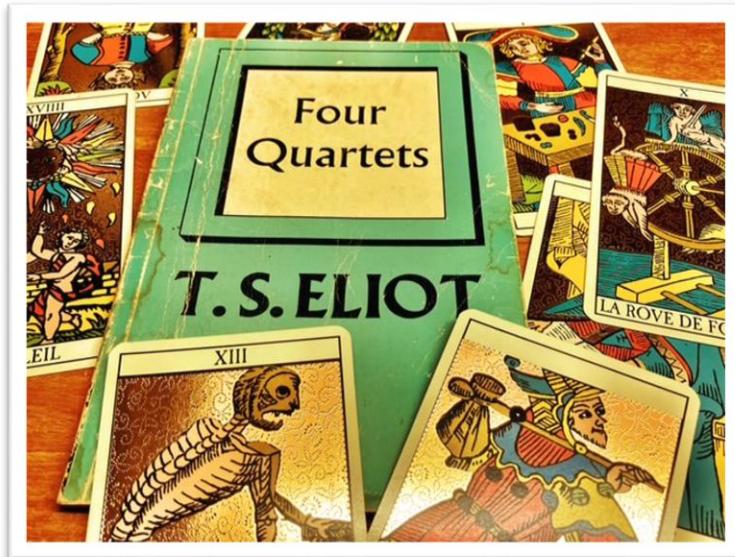


# ‘FOUR QUARTETS’ RETREAT

# An immersive deep dive into TS Eliot's masterpiece of mortality, morality and human existence.

## **With Artist Guides: Fern Smith & Philip Ralph**



**Sunday 6th – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September**

## The Centre for Emergence

## Dyfi Valley, Wales.

**£450-£600 inclusive**

***“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..."***

**TS Eliot's 'Four Quartets' are powerful and beautiful meditations on humanity's relationship with existence, mystery, time, the universe, mortality and the divine.** For over eighty years they have been celebrated and pourled over for their secrets and gifts of wisdom. Four gentle and penetrating explorations of what it means to be human. Hugely celebrated and beloved down the years, these 'Four Quartets' still speak as powerfully to us today, as we grapple with living through an era of profound conflict, change, and collapse, seeking to find hope, meaning, and connection with ourselves, each other and the natural world.

We – Fern Smith and Philip Ralph, founders of co-directors of Emergence - have been in dialogue with these poems for over thirty years, returning to them at times of change and challenge for solace, guidance and wisdom. We have held the dream of focusing a retreat around them for an equally long time and are thrilled to finally be bringing this dream to fruition. We know from our own lived experience that T.S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets' offer rich and rare insights and comfort to all those who engage with them.

**This unique retreat is not a space for study or scholarship,** it is a place to feel, be with and share the deeply human and personal responses the poems evoke and the transformational power they offer as we navigate our way through our lives.

*"At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;*

*Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,*

*But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,*

*Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,*

*Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,*

*There would be no dance, and there is only the dance."*

**In this guided immersive retreat, we invite you to spend time in rest, contemplation and ritual space with each of these four celebrated interlinked poems** – Burnt Norton, East Coker, The Dry Salvages and Little Gidding. Together they offer a route-map and guide to living and dying that is unsurpassed in the history of poetry and literature.

**We come together in the beautiful environs of our home, an eco-converted farmhouse in the hills above Machynlleth in mid-Wales,** where over six days we will spend a full day with each of the four poems. We will gather each morning to read one of the poems and share our personal responses to each work before spending deep time alone in contemplation in the house and its surroundings. We will regather each evening to share reflections and revelations from the day's contemplations.

**On the final evening of the retreat, Fern and Phil will offer a public reading of the 'Four Quartets'** to mark the culmination of our time together.

**This Four Quartets Retreat is for you:**

- If you want to immerse yourself in these classic texts after a lifetime in relationship with them;
- If you are coming to them for the first time with curiosity to how they can speak to you and your life;
- If you need to take time away from the world to rest, reflect, rejuvenate and refresh.

*"In my beginning is my end..."*

**The retreat gives time and opportunities for responses and reflections on the poems with a small and supportive group: to rest; to unravel; to dream, to be...**

**There will be quiet time alone to slow down and for solo reflection, as well as time for witnessing one another and group sharing.** There will be time each day for self-led writing, reading, creative activity or simply for rest and relaxation.

There will also be time to explore the garden and area in which The Barn is situated which has immediate access to a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The site consists of a glade of trees, steep-sided ravine with a 'Celtic Rainforest' zone of Ferns, Lichens, Mosses, Ash, Beech and Oaks. The gardens of The Barn include vegetable beds, big skies and far-reaching views across the hills to Cadair Idris in the distance. There are public footpaths from the front door into the nearby countryside.



## **Booking your PLACE**

This is a small group retreat limited to between 4 and 7 participants. The participation fee includes all evening meals, lunches and breakfasts. All food is abundant, home-cooked vegetarian/vegan and specific diets are lovingly catered for. Accommodation is of a high standard with crisply ironed cotton sheets and towels provided.

**Cost ranges from £450 - £600 depending on accommodation options. Solo occupancy room is £600, the caravan is £500 and vans (bring your own!) or camping in our lovely garden and grounds with access to all inside spaces is £450.**

*"A powerful encounter with what is alive in you. An exploration of life, death and the space in between." Participant*

## Retreat Artist Guides

The retreat will be guided by Fern Smith and Philip Ralph. Fern and Phil have spent decades working in the creative industries of theatre, film and television. We have both undergone deep processes of transformative change through immersing ourselves in myriad practices of ritual, rites of passage, spiritual inquiry, coaching, meditation, facilitation and nature connection. Fern also works as a craniosacral therapist, trauma bodyworker, celebrant, coach, facilitator and wilderness rites of passage guide. Phil works as a script writer for film, theatre and television as well as being a facilitator, mentor and nature quest guide.



*"Thank you so much for your wonderful hosting and facilitation; it was such a luxury to spend that time with you; it was so invigorating to have this time to feel solid, vulnerable, strong, connected. The land around you is very welcoming and 'nutritious' and the house is like a cocoon, a haven one can return to in the knowledge of being safe, warm, comfortable." Retreat Participant*



# Practicalities & Booking

## Travel

We are four miles outside Machynlleth in Powys, mid-Wales. Machynlleth has a mainline train station, two hours from Birmingham and four hours from London. We can collect and drop off at the station so you can travel to us via public transport. Alternatively, if you come by car, we have space for you to park on site. We will send exact location on booking.

## Food

We pre-plan a menu for the whole time we are together which will be vegan/vegetarian, organic and as locally sourced as possible. We bake sourdough wheat/rye/spelt loaves on a daily basis. Please let us know when booking if you have any specific food needs. The participation fee includes all evening meals, lunches and breakfasts. All food is abundant, home-cooked vegetarian/vegan and specific diets are lovingly catered for. Please inform us in advance of dietary requirements and we will endeavour to accommodate them.

## What to Bring

The weather in this part of Wales can be unpredictable and we do intend to be spending time outdoors in nature, so we highly recommend bringing waterproofs, walking boots/shoes and warm clothes.

We also recommend bringing journals, pens, crayons and anything you might want to use to record your experience and process.

## Spaces

Aside from personal sleeping arrangements - we have several spaces available to you during the retreat including a large, beautiful, sun-drenched room used as our group space for meditation and council. Inside the house we have several sitting areas with comfy sofas and wood burners. We also have a quiet library space with a wide range of books on nature, spirituality, transformation, and sustainability. There are many beautiful sitting places outside in the garden and on the surrounding land which you will explore as part of the retreat.

## Arrivals and Departures

**We invite you to arrive by 4pm on Sunday**, the first day of the retreat. We will welcome you, show you your accommodation, orient you to the house and area before we gather for our first meal together and then sit together to commence the retreat.

**We finish on Friday after a final sharing circle and lunch**, leaving plenty of time to travel onwards or return home. We will happily coordinate lifts and pick-ups to and from Machynlleth station.

## Dog

We have a very friendly, small Jack Russell terrier called Jaffa who enjoys company, walks and strokes. She is part of the community here and will be with us throughout the retreat.



*To discuss further and/or to secure your place,*

*please contact us:*

[info@emergence-uk.org](mailto:info@emergence-uk.org)

**We look forward to welcoming you!**

**The Four Quartets Retreat is an Emergence Initiative.**

[www.emergence-uk.org](http://www.emergence-uk.org)

**Emergence creates transformational spaces for self, other and nature connection**