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Fall Reading Recommendations

Thank you to NPR, Nancy Pearl & our Friends

The Bone Clocks by David Mitchell “another challenging book from the author of *Cloud Atlas*”

The Heist by Daniel Silva “one of Nancy Pearl’s ‘best spy series’”

The Hydrogen Sonata by Iain M. Banks “the last book from the creator of the science fiction classic series *The Culture*”

Alexander Hamilton by Ron Chernow “the American Revolution and early republic through the life of an exceptional emigré”

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr “a blind French girl and a German boy’s paths collide during World War II”

Into Thick Air: Biking to the Bellybuttons of the World by Jim Malusa “a botanist rides to the lowest points of six continents”

Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire: A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival. by Peter Stark

The Broken Shore by Peter Temple “a powerful & complex crime novel with a social conscience set in Port Munro, Australia”

Semper Fidelis by Ruth Downie “a mystery set in Roman Britain, includes not only the Emperor Hadrian but Suetonius.”

T. S. Eliot

Poems are compositions written for performance by the human voice. They're meant to engage the ear as well as the eye – – which makes sense when you consider they began as songs accompanied by a lyre (not a liar). Nobody wrote a poem more eloquently, nor more compellingly, than T. S. Eliot. Problem is, I often have trouble understanding what he's getting at— and I've read *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* several times. (Turns out Eliot deliberately introduced obfuscation into his writings, considering it to be the hallmark of a modern poem.)

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1888. He was the last of the six surviving children of parents who came from prominent New England families. As a boy he struggled with a congenital illness and became something of a recluse. To fill in lengthy periods of quiet time he read voraciously— to literature's obvious benefit. After being educated at Harvard, the Sorbonne, and Oxford (no wonder his writings are so polished), Eliot worked for a City of London bank then served as a director at the publishing house of Faber and Faber.

In 1927 Eliot became a naturalized citizen of the UK, and joined the Church of England. (After which, his writings take on a decidedly religious bent.) He was greatly influenced by the poet Ezra Pound, who edited his masterpiece, *The Waste Land*, and encouraged Eliot to stay in Europe. In 1948 Eliot received the Nobel prize in Literature for 'his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry.' Besides those noted above, his poems include *Ash Wednesday*, *The Hollow Men*, and *Four Quartets* (considered by Eliot to be his finest work). Later in life he focused on writing plays, such as *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Rock*, and penned thoughtful critiques on such topics as literature, culture, society, and religion. (The *literati* consider him to be the premier critic of the 20th Century.) For such a prominent icon of *belles-lettres*, however, he produced relatively few classics. T. S. Eliot died in London in 1965.

-Essay by Bill Lounsbery

KRL has all of the poems & plays referenced in this essay.