

“To Walter de la Mare”

by T.S. Eliot

Season 11, Episode 4

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The children who explored the brook and
found
A desert island with a sandy cove
(A hiding place, but very dangerous ground,

For here the water buffalo may rove,
The kinkajou, the mungabey, abound
In the dark jungle of a mango grove,

And shadowy lemurs glide from tree to
tree-

The guardians of some long-lost
treasure-trove)
Recount their exploits at the nursery tea

And when the lamps are lit and curtains
drawn
Demand some poetry, please. Whose shall it
be,
At not quite time for bed?...

Or when the lawn
Is pressed by unseen feet, and ghosts return
Gently at twilight, gently go at dawn,
The sad intangible who grieve and yearn;

When the familiar is suddenly strange
Or the well known is what we yet have to
learn,
And two worlds meet, and intersect, and
change;

When cats are maddened in the moonlight
dance,
Dogs cower, flitter bats, and owls range
At witches' sabbath of the maiden aunts;

When the nocturnal traveller can arouse
No sleeper by his call; or when by chance
An empty face peers from an empty house;

By whom, and by what means, was this
designed?
The whispered incantation which allows
Free passage to the phantoms of the mind?

By you; by those deceptive cadences
Wherewith the common measure is refined;
By conscious art practised with natural
ease;

By the delicate, invisible web you wove-
The inexplicable mystery of sound.

