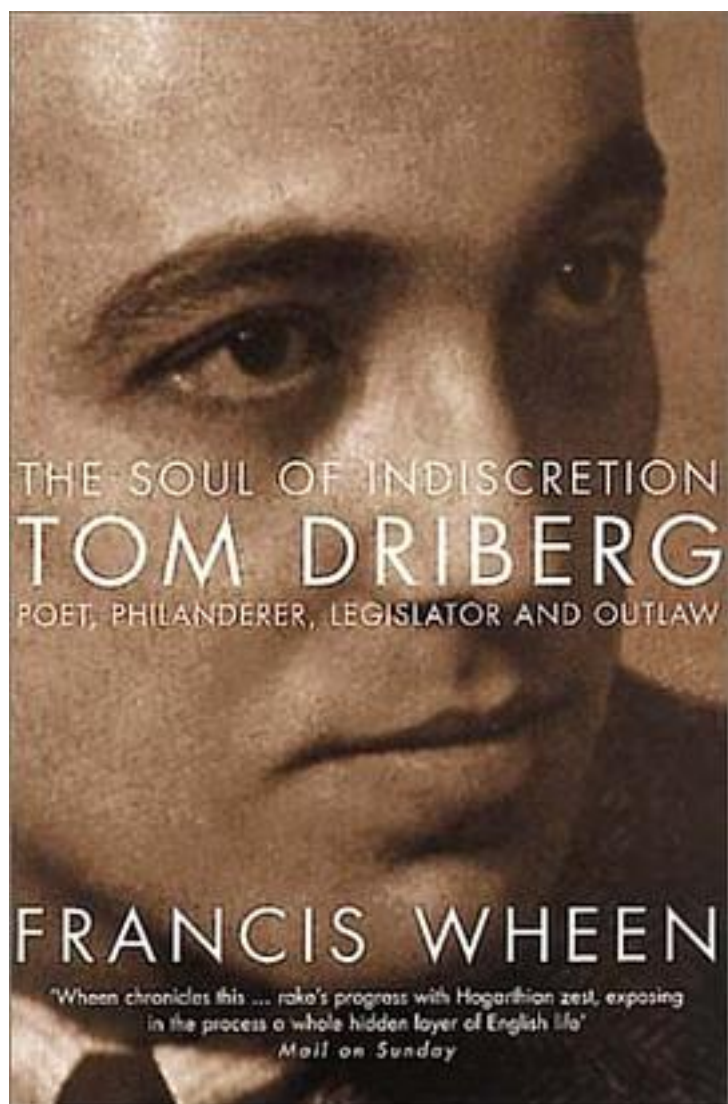


The Soul of Indiscretion



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Francis Wheen's brilliantly comic portrait of one of the 20th-century's great characters, Tom Driberg: wit, parliamentarian, serial cottager, alleged communist spy and friend to the Kray brothers. There are few people for whom marriage was so ill-suited yet well attended: at Tom Driberg's were cabinet ministers and mobsters, Betjeman and Waugh, but it was Osbert Lancaster who commemorated the sheer extraordinariness of the occasion, and with it celebrated the social life of Driberg, and an era of Englishness now passed into history when the Brideshead generation sang the 'Red Flag': Friends of yours and friends of mine, Friends we always thought were dead Friends who toe the party line, Friends we know are off their head Labour friends who're gratified Girl-friends, boy-friends, friends ambiguous At being allowed to kiss the bride. Coloured friends from the Antiguas Artistic friends, a few of whom Friends ordained and friends unfrocked, Are rather keen to kiss the groom. Friends who leave us slightly shocked, Friends from Oxford, friends from pubs, All determined not to miss And even friends from Wormwood scrubs. So rare a spectacle as this!

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