

Poetry analysis questions and answers essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Thomas Hardy's "Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?"

1. The last two stanzas of the poem create images and a scene that absolutely delights "dog lovers". It evokes the clear vision any dog lover has: "What feeling do we ever find to equal among human kind a dog's fidelity!" Here lays the beloved departed, realizing it is the faithful pet, obviously sad at the loss of his mistress, digging upon her grave. This is a vision every dog lover could have. But, hilariously true to fickle form, the canine had no such intent. It is more of an "Oops! Sorry!" response: "I am sorry but I quite forgot it was your resting-place." It could only have been worse if the dog had been doing something else on the grave besides digging.
2. The Titanic was discovered by Dr. Robert Ballard in 1985 at a depth of 12, 500 feet in the Atlantic Ocean, according to information posted at the following website: http://www.seawfs.gsfc.nasa.gov/OCEAN_PLANET/HTML/titanic/html
3. There are several aspects of "Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?" that are representative of various aspects of Modernism. The very title and topic is characteristic of the sense of literary freedom. What at first appears to be a melancholy work takes quite an unexpected turn toward humor. There is also a bit of an allusion to of classical romanticism, particularly the line "No tendance of her mound can loose her spirit from Death's gin." Hardy enjoys the novelty of not only the mistress "speaking from the grave" but he also gives voice to her pet. Perhaps most striking is the novel rhythmic scheme. The first line of each stanza repeats in a fashion the title. Then the second and sixth

line rhyme and a resonant cadence are produced with rhyming third, fourth, and fifth lines.

T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

1. The morbidly shy J. Alfred Prufrock has "known the arms already, known them all—arms that are braceleted and white and bare" belonging to the "society women". He has met these women before and they have made an obvious impression upon him. They are "there" but they cannot be reached by the tentative Prufrock, uncertain as to how to even approach: "And how should I begin?"
2. "That" appears to refer to the ability to communicate; would it be worth all of the trouble if in the end, either party has to say "that is not what I meant at all. That is not it, at all". The "that" lines are repeated; first by him, then by the woman, indicating neither one of them can communicate well.
3. Prufrock's reference to his appearance may be his way of looking at what he will look like. He states "And indeed there will be time to wonder...time to turn back..." The image of thin hair and thin arms and legs gives the impression of middle age and also supplies a reason and theme for his reluctance to go out. He is out of touch with nature as well—he can hear the mermaids singing but does not believe they will sing to him. It also implies something magical about the sea and being called to its depths, and death, by the siren song. For Prufrock, it will be a human voice bringing him back from his sleep, only to drown again in his depression. For Eliot the sea image is more an aside than

that of Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach* or William Wordsworth's *The World Is Too Much With Us* . In both of those works the sea is central to the poetry, and both authors refer to the ancient majesty of the sea. For Prufrock the sea does not offer death, glory, or salvation; it is “outside” his sphere.

References

Arnold, Matthew. 1867. *Dover Beach* .

Eliot, T. S. 1917. *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* .

Hardy, Thomas. 1914. *Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?*

Wordsworth, William. 1807. *The World Is Too Much With Us* .