

"the love song of j alfred prufrock" by t.s. eliot essay sample

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



In T. S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Prufrock who is the narrator speaks with an unconfident tone towards finding love.

Throughout the poem Prufrock has an unmotivated attitude in which he is regretful about being insecure with himself, especially, in front of women.

The reader may notice that Prufrock is very self-conscious of himself when he is in the presence of a woman. He also has no drive or motivation to go after them. Prufrock's lack of confidence causes him to easily be rejected or humiliated by woman. Therefore he does not try to find his love, to keep from being denied and have his hopes and dreams crushed by this woman even more. The negative outlook Prufrock has on life restricts him from being able to find a woman to settle down and start his life with.

The Introduction of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" begins with an epigraph in which Prufrock admits his fear about his insecurities to only one person who is in the same predicament as he is. Knowing that this person will not be capable of telling anyone else the confession about his personal self-doubtfulness, the only reason Prufrock is able to admit this to another is because, "If I thought my answer were to someone who/ might see the world again, then there would be/ no more stirrings of this flame. Since it is true" (epigraph). Prufrock understands that this other guy that he is addressing throughout the poem and him have no chance of ever being able to see life again. So there is no possibility of this man telling another soul about what Prufrock is about to say. At this point is the only time in the poem Prufrock is confident in him from talking to someone else about his fears and lack of confidence. As he says "Should I, after tea and cakes and ices, / Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?" (79-80) referring to how he

decided not to go up and talk to this lady, but debated whether or not he should have. After talking about this situation he realizes that this moment was an important crisis for him, because it could have greatly increased his outlook on life.

After choosing poorly in not talking to the woman, Prufrock begins to question himself in saying, " Would it have been worth while, / To have bitten off the matter with a smile,"(90-91) If only he had the confidence in himself to talk to this woman then the two of them could have lived a satisfied life together. Prufrock seems to be infatuated with a specific woman because he keeps trying to get her attention. By the context of the poem you can tell that Prufrock has already seen this lady around before, assuming that he has tried to talk to her, but does not have the self motivation to do so. As he goes on to say about her, " And I have known the arms already, known them all-,

Arms that are braceleted and white and bare

(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)

Is it perfume from a dress

That makes me so digress?" (62-66)

Prufrock already has seen this woman because he is able to recognize her by her arms, bracelets, and light brown hair, yet is always too fearful to talk to her; however he continues to chase after her anyways. Her perfume makes him turn aside, blaming it for making him too uncomfortable to address and talk to her. Prufrock finds every excuse other than the actual truth that he is too fearful to talk to this woman. As well as saying that he does not know

how to address her or how to carry on a conversation with her, " And should I then presume? / And how should I begin?" (68-69) Out of sheer confusion and nervousness Prufrock is baffled on how he should approach this woman as well as what to talk about in order to carry on a meaningful conversation with her, but instead circumvents the situation for a later date.

Prufrock is also very timid and cautious as he says " To wonder, " Do I dare?" and, " Do I dare?"/ Time to turn back and descend the stair, / With a bald spot in the middle of my hair-" (38-40). Showing how his confidence and ability to talk to a woman is a massive effect on his capability of finding love. It shows how much hesitation he has towards talking towards women. In the quote above he is talking and questioning himself, whether or not he should address the lady or to just turn around and walk right back the stairs. Not even confronting her to see if she has potential to be his lifelong loved one. While the last sentence in this quote refers to how he is always going to be like that, directly referring to the bald spot that has grown in the middle of his hair, a clear sign of aging.

Even more so later in the poem when he states, " I grow old...I grow old.../ I shall wear my trousers rolled." (119-120) Back to the fact that although he is growing older Prufrock is still determined to spend the rest of his days with this woman. Except you see his perspective towards this woman slowly starts to fade and die down at the end of the poem. At the very end of the poem he refers to the beach and mermaids, a happy and peaceful place, but changes the meaning completely saying how, " I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each. / I do not think that they will sing to me." You can

really see how the love for this woman is slowly starting to fade, becoming more and more of a melancholy type of atmosphere rather than the happy beach and mermaid scene, knowing that he will never live his life loved.

Although Prufrock is in Dante's Inferno and is forever away from earth, having only the memories of that one special lady who had such a huge impact on his life, now living the rest of his life full of regrets with only one person to talk to and reminisce. About all the times he should have but didn't or could have but wanted to wait until it was perfect, wanting everything to be in the right place at the right time, since he was a little bit anal and, he liked things to be done according to him. Everything in a specific order, and done in his way " I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;" (51) really planning out his life and how he planned on it to work out for him. While waiting for the right moment and time, he is now stuck forever with the thought of this woman and, on how the insecurities he had with himself and how they kept him from finding love throughout his life.