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[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



Samantha Kozera Ms. McGrath ENG 4U 20 March 2013 Analysis of A High-Toned Christian Woman The poem A High-Toned Christian Woman by Wallace Stevens used many sound devices to create an amazing poem and therefore should be considered to be "the best poem in the world". If we dissect the poem, we can see that almost every line has a sound device that affects the poem's atmosphere, meaning or use of words. The mood seemed playful from combinations of words and sound devices. The alliteration in line 19: "May, merely may, madame..." makes the speaker sound fun instead of strict. The onomatopoeia in line 18: "Such tink and tank and tunk-a-tunk-tunk..." also bring up the playful mood. His tone seems to be mocking the Christian woman's beliefs instead of having a mature conversation.

Repetition of "Madame" as well as "palm", planets, and fiction makes it clear to the reader that these subjects are important. Stevens creates comparisons from the first mention of those subjects to the next mention. For example, he states in the first line that "poetry is the supreme fiction" then later speaks about the woman's beliefs as fiction as well. The author also repeats the subject planets. The first time the author speaks of planets is in a context of a "project beyond the planets" (Line 8-9). The project could be poetry and the place could be his imagination. Since we often associate something beyond the planets as Heaven (especially since Christianity is in our minds at this point), the author chooses the repetition of planets to show that anything beyond it is a figment of the imagination. He speaks of Heaven in line 3 with an alliteration, "haunted Heaven" after he speaks about a "nave" (Line 2). This line creates a dark and cruel feeling. A nave is an empty place for worshippers and a haunted Heaven gives the idea that Heaven is a

place for dead worshippers. In line 2 and 3 assonance is used with the " a" sound being the emphasis. These lines are very important to the poem by putting emphasis on these lines the author brings that to the reader's attention. The author's diction and images like " Squiggling like saxophones" (Line 12), " muzzy bellies" (Line 16) and " jovial hullabaloo" (Line 20) make it seem like the speaker trying to persuade the woman to think a certain way and is making fun of what she thinks to accomplish that. The image of a widow wincing is a very sharp image that's emphasised by the alliteration with the " w" sound that contrasts the fun mood. This could represent the comparison of the interpretation of poetry and the interpretation of religious literature. Also, this widow could represent the Christian woman, who is wincing at such crazy ideas spoken by the speaker of the poem. In conclusion, the sound devices and images contribute to the mood and meaning of the poem because it brings emphasis to important lines. Through connotations and alliterations, Wallace Stevens makes a short poem into a huge (controversial) idea. The fact that someone can accomplish this with only twenty-two lines makes it eligible to be the best poem ever.