*T.S.Eliot*

*Class notes:*

He is a modernist. He is more contemporary. He was interested in Lawrence: he continues his path. Philosophy in his poems: emphasizes that people do not understand time.

Mathew uncle: teach people culture. To do it he wrote literature.

Society that believes in religion and society that try to understand themselves. People to be as free as possible.

The move to a Godless society. Looking for a civilized society.

Elliot is not a liberative, not sympathetic with the liberative opinion of free trade. What the point of life? Making money. So, literature and religion were not worth it. Capitalism. Liberalism is democracy. The only way to put together the society is by a strong leader: military dictation. Good solid society with strong individuals. Not sense of responsibility with negotiating.

Modern civilization through religion.

“*The Hollow men*” and “*Gerontion*” are his latest poems. The other are ones of the first’s ones.

*The Love Song of Alfred J.Prufrock*

*S’io credesse che mia risposta fosse  
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,  
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.  
Ma percioche giammai di questo fondo  
Non torno vivo alcun, s’i’odo il vero,  
Senza tema d’infamia ti rispondo.*

It also gives us the idea that the narrator is speaking to another person, and thus what is being said is a reflection of his own personality.

Finally, there is a presence in the poem besides the [voice](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/voice/) of J. Prufrock – the women talking of Michelangelo. Though they are a living presence, the focus on ‘Michelangelo’ actually serves to deaden them; they exist in the poem as a series of conversations, which Prufrock lumps into one category by calling them ‘the women.’ It sets the scene at a party and simultaneously sets Prufrock on his own.

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is spread out against the sky

Like a patient etherized upon a table;

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,

The muttering retreats

Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels

And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:

Streets that follow like a tedious argument

Of insidious intent

To lead you to an overwhelming question ...

Oh, do not ask, “What is it?”

Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,

The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,

Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,

Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,

The fragmentation of the cat could also symbolize the fragmentation of Prufrock’s psyche, the very schism that is leading him to have this [conversation](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/dialogue/), his hope of risk, and his terror of risking his interest in women, and his terror of them.

This fragmentation can also be applied to the earlier reference to “the women,” which are not really described in any way but are instead considered by the sum of their parts in conversation – they only exist because they are “talking of Michelangelo.”

Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,

Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,

And seeing that it was a soft October night,

Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time

For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,

Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;

There will be time, there will be time

To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;

There will be time to murder and create,

And time for all the works and days of hands

That lift and drop a question on your plate;

Time for you and time for me,

And time yet for a hundred indecisions,

And for a hundred visions and revisions,

Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time

To wonder, “Do I dare?” and, “Do I dare?”

“Talking of Michelangelo” modern conceptions.

Preoccupation with the time.

Repetitive sentences:” destructed for destruction by destruction”. Constancy.

Spiritual death. Worried about the spirituality.

First serious question of what the intellectual poet should do: “Do I dare Disturb the universe?”.

“I have measured out my life with coffee spoons” this is what intellectual do: they spend they time drinking coffee.

Vision of redemption: Christ.

As we are so small and without importance, he tried to say something meaningful.

Time to turn back and descend the stair,

With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —

(They will say: “How his hair is growing thin!”)

My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,

My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin —

(They will say: “But how his arms and legs are thin!”)

Do I dare

Disturb the universe?

In a minute there is time

For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,

I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;

I know the voices dying with a dying fall

Beneath the music from a farther room.

               So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—

The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,

And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,

Prufrock’s overwhelming emotions come to a full appearance in this stanza: we can take his insistence that ‘there is time’ as an attempt to convince himself that there is no need to rush into action (even though, as stated before, the repetition of the word ‘time’ renders it almost the opposite). Here, we are also shown what Prufrock is doing: he is outside looking in and trying to decide whether or not to enter this party where other people are concerned with conversations that do not apply to him.

When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,

Then how should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?

               And how should I presume?

rufrock’s agony over addressing the woman at the center of the poem is evident here: he knows that she exists, he knows who she is, he thinks of her in terms of arms and eyes and bracelets, but he cannot approach her.

‘Lonely men’ could very well symbolize Prufrock’s own situation in a very overt way.

Prufrock reduces himself to an animal, lived-in and alone, sheltered at the bottom of the dark ocean.

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?

Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.

               And should I then presume?

               And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets

And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes

Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? ...

I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!

Smoothed by long fingers,

Violent words,

Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,

Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.

Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,

Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?

But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,

Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,

I am no prophet — and here’s no great matter;

I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,

And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,

And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,

After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,

Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,

Would it have been worth while,

To have bitten off the matter with a smile,

To have squeezed the universe into a ball

To roll it towards some overwhelming question,

To say: “I am Lazarus, come from the dead,

Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all”—

If one, settling a pillow by her head

               Should say: “That is not what I meant at all;

               That is not it, at all.”

And would it have been worth it, after all,

Would it have been worth while,

After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,

After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—

And this, and so much more?—

It is impossible to say just what I mean!

But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:

Would it have been worth while

If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,

And turning toward the window, should say:

               “That is not it at all,

               That is not what I meant, at all.”

And then he loses the urge, once more, reduces himself again to the part of the fool, shrinking himself down from the heroic stature that he has built up in the previous two stanzas – that of Lazarus, and Prince Hamlet, romantic and wordy and good at speaking his mind – to a fraction of his former self.

I grow old ... I grow old ...

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled – the most known lines in the poem.

The poem is kind of chaotic, like a mess. So hard to analyse. The end its so pessimistic.

Once more, there’s the presence of women – unattainable women, in this case, symbolized by the mermaids

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do

To swell a progress, start a scene or two,

Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,

Deferential, glad to be of use,

Politic, cautious, and meticulous;

Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;

At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—

Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old ... I grow old ...

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind?   Do I dare to eat a peach?

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves

Combing the white hair of the waves blown back

When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea

By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown

Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ by [T.S. Eliot](https://poemanalysis.com/t-s-eliot/) is the inner monologue of a city gentleman who is stricken by feelings of isolation and inadequacy and incapability of taking decisive action.

*Portrait of a Lady*

Thou hast committed —Fornication: but that was in another country,And besides, the wench is dead. *(*The Jew of Malta*)*

In the first stanza of ‘Portrait of a Lady’ the [speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/), the young man, sets the scene. He recalls how he and his female companion were in a dark room that was lit only by “four wax candles”.

The pair have just come back from a concert, one of Polish music. The next moments are filled with [conversation](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/dialogue/) about the concert, particularly the performance of Chopin and how the music seemed to permeate the room.

I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon

You have the scene arrange itself — as it will seem to do—

With "I have saved this afternoon for you";

And four wax candles in the darkened room,

Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,

An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb

Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.

We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole

Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.

"So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul

Should be resurrected only among friends

Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom

That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room."

—And so the conversation slips

Among velleities and carefully caught regrets

Through attenuated tones of violins

Mingled with remote cornets

Here, she expresses her love and admiration for her friends. Life is complicated and filled with worthless trivialities and her friends lighten her burdens.

She stops speaking generally of friends and moves on to regard the speaker in the same way. He is one of these close and important friends. She feels lucky to have found a friendship such as his. The lady knows that her life would be a nightmare without people like him.

And begins.

"You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends,

And how, how rare and strange it is, to find

In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends,

(For indeed I do not love it ... you knew? you are not blind!

How keen you are!)

To find a friend who has these qualities,

Who has, and gives

Those qualities upon which friendship lives.

How much it means that I say this to you —

Without these friendships — life, what *cauchemar*!"

Among the winding of the violins

And the ariettes

Of cracked cornets

Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins

Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,

Capricious monotone

That is at least one definite "false note."

— Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,

Admire the monuments,

Discuss the late events,

Correct our watches by the public clocks.

Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks.

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom

She has a bowl of lilacs in her room

And twists one in her fingers while she talks.

"Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know

What life is, you who hold it in your hands";

(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)

"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,

And youth is cruel, and has no remorse

The second part of ‘Portrait of a Lady’ begins with a new scene, one that is quite different from that painted in the first part of the poem. She addresses him as “my friend” and suggests that he does not understand the life that he holds in his hands.

The woman tries to help the speaker understand what life is and how he’s treating it.

The woman adds at the end of this stanza that the new spring makes her think of her own youth in Paris in the spring.

And smiles at situations which it cannot see."

I smile, of course,

And go on drinking tea.

"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall

My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,

I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world

To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune

Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:

"I am always sure that you understand

My feelings, always sure that you feel,

She addresses his youth again, even more earnestly and entreatingly this time than she’d done before. The woman believes that the young man understands her and can feel the emotion behind her words.

The third stanza makes use of anaphora in the repetition of “you” at the beginning of all three lines. The woman passionately wills the young man to understand the power he has.

The lady questions herself in the fourth stanza. She asks, rhetorically, what she has that she can give him. Immediately, she answers her own question saying that she can give him “the friendship and the sympathy” of someone who is much closer to the end than he.

Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.

You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.

You will go on, and when you have prevailed

You can say: at this point many a one has failed.

But what have I, but what have I, my friend,

To give you, what can you receive from me?

Only the friendship and the sympathy

Of one about to reach her journey's end.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends ...."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends

For what she has said to me?

You will see me any morning in the park

Reading the comics and the sporting page.

Particularly I remark.

An English countess goes upon the stage.

A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,

Another bank defaulter has confessed.

I keep my countenance,

I remain self-possessed

Except when a street-piano, mechanical and tired

Reiterates some worn-out common song

With the smell of hyacinths across the garden

Recalling things that other people have desired.

Are these ideas right or wrong?

III

The October night comes down; returning as before

Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease

When he goes to speak to the woman he intends to take his leave and depart on a journey. She addresses him, asking when he’s going to return. Without waiting for an answer she knows that he will not have one for her. The woman realizes that he doesn’t know when he’s coming back and he will likely become much more interested in what he learns there.

ere, she tells the young man that “all our friends” thought that as a pair they would get on quite well. Their feelings, she adds, should’ve related to one another. It is clear that she feels regret about this. She had expectations that weren’t fulfilled.

I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door

And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?

But that's a useless question.

You hardly know when you are coming back,

You will find so much to learn."

My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."

My self-possession flares up for a second;

*This* is as I had reckoned.

"I have been wondering frequently of late

(But our beginnings never know our ends!)

Why we have not developed into friends."

I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark

Suddenly, his expression in a glass.

My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,

They all were sure our feelings would relate

So closely! I myself can hardly understand.

We must leave it now to fate.

You will write, at any rate.

Perhaps it is not too late.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape

To find expression ... dance, dance

Like a dancing bear,

Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.

Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance—

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,

Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose;

Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand

With the smoke coming down above the housetops;

Doubtful, for quite a while

Not knowing what to feel or if I understand

Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon ...

Would she not have the advantage, after all?

This music is successful with a "dying fall"

Now that we talk of dying—

And should I have the right to smile?

‘Portrait of a Lady’ by [T.S. Eliot](https://poemanalysis.com/t-s-eliot/biography/) depicts the relationship between a callous young man and a sensitive older woman who desires love.

*Predules*

In the first part of *‘Preludes’*the speaker begins by [setting](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/setting/) the scene. It is a winter evening and the day is coming to a close. The speaker describes it as though it is a person, he [personifies](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/personification/) it, allowing a reader to better understand the place.

The next section of ‘Preludes’ is also a single stanza. Here, the speaker skips the rest of the night, and morning has dawned once more.

Here, the speaker returns to the listener, the person or people he referred to as “You” in the first stanza.

It is not entirely clear what Eliot meant in these lines but perhaps he was thinking about how one’s own image of the world makes the world what it is. One’s emotions influence how the world seems at any given time.

**I**

The winter evening settles down

With smell of steaks in passageways.

Six o’clock.

The burnt-out ends of smoky days.

And now a gusty shower wraps

The grimy scraps

Of withered leaves about your feet

And newspapers from vacant lots;

The showers beat

On broken blinds and chimney-pots,

And at the corner of the street

A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.

And then the lighting of the lamps.

**II**

The morning comes to consciousness

Of faint stale smells of beer

From the sawdust-trampled street

With all its muddy feet that press

To early coffee-stands.

With the other masquerades

That time resumes,

One thinks of all the hands

That are raising dingy shades

In a thousand furnished rooms.

**III**

You tossed a blanket from the bed,

You lay upon your back, and waited;

You dozed, and watched the night revealing

The thousand sordid images

Of which your soul was constituted;

They flickered against the ceiling.

And when all the world came back

And the light crept up between the shutters

And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,

The fifth stanza only contains four lines and transitions from the second person to the [first person](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/first-person-point-of-view/). Now, the speaker describes how he is,

In the final three lines of ‘Preludes’ the speaker returns to the second person and asks the reader to “Wipe” their hand across their mouth “and laugh.” This is a return to the previous image of time going nowhere. He describes the world as revolving endlessly and as history repeating itself. The “ancient women” come again and again to “Gather…fuel in vacant lots.”

You had such a vision of the street

As the street hardly understands;

Sitting along the bed’s edge, where

You curled the papers from your hair,

Or clasped the yellow soles of feet

In the palms of both soiled hands.

**IV**

His soul stretched tight across the skies

That fade behind a city block,

Or trampled by insistent feet

At four and five and six o’clock;

And short square fingers stuffing pipes,

And evening newspapers, and eyes

Assured of certain certainties,

The conscience of a blackened street

Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled

Around these images, and cling:

The notion of some infinitely gentle

Infinitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;

The worlds revolve like ancient women

Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

Broadly though, it takes a reader through life in 1919 and the changes, from an old man named Gerontion’s [perspective](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/perspective/). He was in the war and spends time at the beginning of the poem juxtaposing it against his current life. He’s old now, long past his days of fighting and takes a very strong dislike to the money-hungry, religiously ignorant and politically willful people who live around him today.

Contraposition of the young age and the old age.

Tyger: just with Christianity. Transition from earlier poems to the old poems.

A lack of life. Religion has to do with a survival in a really bad situation. Life is something to be enjoyable, and then the afterlife would be better.

Old man suggests an old civilization: waiting for rain is waiting for inspiration.

First World War: cataclysmal event than prepared Europe for the democracy. Liberate democracy = democracy without freedom.

Dramatic monologue. Voice of the speaker instead of the voice of Elliot.

The landscape provided is really hard: Milton’s Paradise Lost.

*Gerontion*

*Thou hast nor youth nor age  
                         But as it were an after dinner sleep  
                         Dreaming of both.*

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,

Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.

I was neither at the hot gates

Nor fought in the warm rain

Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,

Bitten by flies, fought.

My house is a decayed house,

And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner,

Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,

Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.

The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;

Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.

The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,

Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.

                                              I an old man,

A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders.  ‘We would see a sign!’

The word within a word, unable to speak a word,

Swaddled with darkness.  In the juvescence of the year

Came Christ the tiger

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,

To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk

Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero

With caressing hands, at Limoges

The Prophet looking for signs.

Who walked all night in the next room;

By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;

By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room

Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp

Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door.

      Vacant shuttles

Weave the wind.  I have no ghosts,

An old man in a draughty house

Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now

History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors

This is one of the most knowns.

“Think now”: this is the importance of thinking that he believes.

Kind of very modern’s poetic and traditional religious.

Little meditation in History, in the concept of History.

Desire: the opposite as Lawrence.

He is looking for salvation, but not lucky at all.

And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,

Guides us by vanities.  Think now

She gives when our attention is distracted

And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions

That the giving famishes the craving.  Gives too late

What’s not believed in, or is still believed,

In memory only, reconsidered passion.  Gives too soon

Into weak hands, what’s thought can be dispensed with

Till the refusal propagates a fear.  Think

Neither fear nor courage saves us.  Unnatural vices

Are fathered by our heroism.  Virtues

Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.

These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year.  Us he devours.  Think at last

We have not reached conclusion, when I

Stiffen in a rented house.  Think at last

I have not made this show purposelessly

And it is not by any concitation

Of the backward devils.

I would meet you upon this honestly.

I that was near your heart was removed therefrom

To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.

I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it

Since what is kept must be adulterated?

I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:

How should I use it for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations

Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,

Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,

With pungent sauces, multiply variety

In a wilderness of mirrors.  What will the spider do

Suspend its operations, will the weevil

Delay?  De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled

Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear

In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits

Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,

White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,

And an old man driven by the Trades

To a sleepy corner.

                                   Tenants of the house,

Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

*The Hollow Men*

Mistah Kurtz-he dead            A penny for the Old Guy  
  
  
                        I  
  
    We are the hollow men  
    We are the stuffed men  
    Leaning together  
    Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
    Our dried voices, when  
    We whisper together  
    Are quiet and meaningless  
    As wind in dry grass  
    Or rats' feet over broken glass  
    In our dry cellar  
     
    Shape without form, shade without colour,  
    Paralysed force, gesture without motion;  
     
    Those who have crossed  
    With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
    Remember us-if at all-not as lost  
    Violent souls, but only  
    As the hollow men  
    The stuffed men.  
  
     
                              II  
  
    Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
    In death's dream kingdom  
    These do not appear:  
    There, the eyes are  
    Sunlight on a broken column  
    There, is a tree swinging  
    And voices are  
    In the wind's singing  
    More distant and more solemn  
    Than a fading star.  
     
    Let me be no nearer  
    In death's dream kingdom  
    Let me also wear  
    Such deliberate disguises  
    Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
    In a field  
    Behaving as the wind behaves  
    No nearer-  
     
    Not that final meeting  
    In the twilight kingdom  
  
     
                    III  
  
    This is the dead land  
    This is cactus land  
    Here the stone images  
    Are raised, here they receive  
    The supplication of a dead man's hand  
    Under the twinkle of a fading star.  
     
    Is it like this  
    In death's other kingdom  
    Waking alone  
    At the hour when we are  
    Trembling with tenderness  
    Lips that would kiss  
    Form prayers to broken stone.  
  
     
                      IV  
  
    The eyes are not here  
    There are no eyes here  
    In this valley of dying stars  
    In this hollow valley  
    This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms  
     
    In this last of meeting places  
    We grope together  
    And avoid speech  
    Gathered on this beach of the tumid river  
     
    Sightless, unless  
    The eyes reappear  
    As the perpetual star  
    Multifoliate rose  
    Of death's twilight kingdom  
    The hope only  
    Of empty men.  
  
     
                            V  
  
    Here we go round the prickly pear    Prickly pear prickly pear    Here we go round the prickly pear    At five o'clock in the morning.  
     
    Between the idea  
    And the reality  
    Between the motion  
    And the act  
    Falls the Shadow  
                                    For Thine is the Kingdom  
     
    Between the conception  
    And the creation  
    Between the emotion  
    And the response  
    Falls the Shadow  
                                    Life is very long  
     
    Between the desire  
    And the spasm  
    Between the potency  
    And the existence  
    Between the essence  
    And the descent  
    Falls the Shadow  
                                    For Thine is the Kingdom  
     
    For Thine is  
    Life is  
    For Thine is the  
     
    This is the way the world ends    This is the way the world ends    This is the way the world ends    Not with a bang but a whimper.

 The poem begins with the [speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/), who is really a group, describing how their lives as “The Hollow Men.” They are, or they are like a group of scarecrows. The men are exiting somewhere between life and death, in a world, they have no agency in. It becomes clear as the poem progresses that they are unable to enter into true death. There is no money for them to cross the river. Instead, they have to wait for something to change.

At the end of the poem, the men are described as dancing around a cactus and singing. Even in this [context](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/context/), they are unable to finish the song or their prayers to God. The poem ends with the speaker stating that the world is going to end anticlimactically. There will be no big explosion, instead, it will go out with a whisper.

Life and death. World War Two.

Kind of references to the religions.

4 parts of the existence where he tries to look for redemption. Any form of civilization. It took place the First World War, after that it comes something even more monstrous.