

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

- “Prufrock” is a variation on the dramatic monologue, a type of poem popular with Eliot’s predecessors. Dramatic monologues are similar to soliloquies in plays. Three things characterize the dramatic monologue:
 - It is the utterances of a specific individual (not the poet) at a specific moment in time.
 - The monologue is specifically directed at a listener or listeners whose presence is not directly referenced but is merely suggested in the speaker’s words.
 - The primary focus is the development and revelation of the speaker’s character.

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- Prufrock, the poem's speaker, seems to be addressing a potential lover, with whom he would like to "force the moment to its crisis" by somehow consummating their relationship.
- Prufrock knows too much of life to "dare" an approach to the woman: In his mind he hears the comments others make about his inadequacies, and he chides himself for "presuming" emotional interaction could be possible at all.

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- The form of the verse co-operates in this universe of non-ending by avoiding the different sorts of progressiveness that would come from using stanzas, or blank verse, or heroic couplets.
- Eliot's poem has no regular rhyme or rhythmical patterning: it is in free verse, *vers libre*, though the effect here is anything but a launch into untrammelled freedom, as some of the proponents of *vers libre* at the beginning of the 20th century liked to claim.

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- The poem comprises thoughts of a middle-aged man whose life is beset in confusion and does not allow him to act according to his will.
- His subconscious mind asks questions that have deep philosophical meanings and is also afraid of rejection.
- He considers himself unworthy of women, as he continues to worry about the reaction of the people.

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- The poem reflects modern delusional thought's through Prufrock on how the ancient society forced people to live meaningless lives and allow other's opinion to dominate their thoughts. This fear of being judged leaves a person broken, and as he/she becomes old, they regret their decision and become depressive as seen in the poem.

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- Right from the very start, by addressing itself to a fictional person, the poem is announcing that it's a "dramatic monologue." We know that a "dialogue" is two people talking, so a "monologue" must be one person talking, because "mono" means "one." The poem is "dramatic" because it is written in the voice of a speaker other than the poet.
- The title tells us that the speaker is a guy named J. Alfred Prufrock – this is his song.
- It's not clear who Prufrock is singing to, but the title gives us a hint. Love songs are usually sung to people you're in love with, so it's a safe bet that Prufrock is addressing someone he loves.