



Name: _____

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Write your initial response to this poem. (Did you like it, not like it, did any images stand out, was anything confusing, what appealed to you, what turned you away, etc.)

You will complete the following questions in small groups.

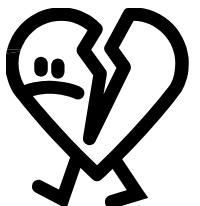
1. Search the first stanza for any images of emptiness (literal or figurative). Write at least two of those images here.

2. Stanza 3 (line 15) begins by describing "The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes." What animal is the fog and smoke compared to? What mood or tone is implied with this metaphor?

3. a. What is the stereotype of people who spend their days drinking coffee or having tea with others? (Especially back in the day; what types of people would make time for "high tea" and such?)

b. Prufrock says "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" (51). What might he be implying with that statement?

4. Prufrock says, "I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (73-74). What do the lines imply about Prufrock's opinion of himself?



5. Prufrock asks if, after having tea, it would have been worth while “to have bitten off the matter with a smile, / to have squeezed the universe into a ball” (91-92).

a. What might Prufrock mean by squeezing “the universe into a ball”?

b. Contrast “squeezing the universe into a ball” with drinking tea (the two events of the stanza). In what ways do they differ?

6. In line 122, Prufrock asks “Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?” These rather mundane questions are posed in a very serious way. Explain why.

7. Twice, Eliot interrupts his poem with the couplet: “In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo” (13-14 & 35-36).

a. In what way do these women appear ignorant?

b. What effect do these interruptions have on the rest of the poem? What do these interruptions imply about people’s priorities?

Stop. Complete this last question on your own.

Compose your final evaluation of the poem. To you, what was the poem about? Was it effective or ineffective? Explain your thinking as much as possible.