

Quiz 22

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

1. Although the title of Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” tells us that it is a “love song,” our traditional expectations for what this would mean are not met as read on. In what ways is this poem a love song? To whom is it addressed—for instance, who is the “you”? What kind of man is J. Alfred Prufrock that he would write a love song in such a way? If it is not a love song, why would Eliot mislead the reader into thinking it is?
 2. In poems filled with references and quotations (such as “The Love Poem of J. Alfred Prufrock”) from other literary works, particular attention should be paid to their epigraphs—quotes that introduce the poems. Look at Canto XXVII in Dante’s *Inferno*. Does the story of false counselors that Dante recounts tell us anything of the poem it serves to introduce. Is Prufrock a false counselor? Is Eliot?
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