***Eliot, Pound, W.C.W.***

[**T. S. ELIOT**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/t-s-eliot) **1888-1965**

**The Love Song of J. Alfred 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.*

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,

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?”

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,

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?

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,

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.”

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.

Source: *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (1963)

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", commonly known as "Prufrock", is the first professionally published poem by American-born British poet T. S. Eliot. Eliot began writing "Prufrock" in February 1910, and it was first published in the June 1915 issue of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse at the instigation of Ezra Pound.

June 1915 issue of

Εικόνα που περιέχει κείμενο

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[Ezra Pound](https://poets.org/poet/ezra-pound)  1885-1972

**In a Station of the Metro**

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:

Petals on a wet, black bough.

**A Pact**

I make truce with you, Walt Whitman—  
I have detested you long enough.  
I come to you as a grown child  
Who has had a pig-headed father;  
I am old enough now to make friends.  
It was you that broke the new wood,  
Now is a time for carving.  
We have one sap and one root—  
Let there be commerce between us.

Words from my students regarding the wood anaphora of the poem:

‘He might refer to wood, carving, root, sap because Walt Whitman was trained as a **carpenter** and wishes to communicate with him using these terms.’

‘He uses the word **commerce** to show exchange and competition between them.’

[William Carlos Williams](https://poets.org/poet/william-carlos-williams)  1883-1963

**Spring and All [By the road to the contagious hospital]**

I

By the road to the contagious hospital  
under the surge of the blue  
mottled clouds driven from the  
northeast-a cold wind. Beyond, the  
waste of broad, muddy fields  
brown with dried weeds, standing and fallen

patches of standing water  
the scattering of tall trees

All along the road the reddish  
purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy  
stuff of bushes and small trees  
with dead, brown leaves under them  
leafless vines—

Lifeless in appearance, sluggish  
dazed spring approaches—

They enter the new world naked,  
cold, uncertain of all  
save that they enter. All about them  
the cold, familiar wind—

Now the grass, tomorrow  
the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf  
One by one objects are defined—  
It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf

But now the stark dignity of  
entrance—Still, the profound change  
has come upon them: rooted, they  
grip down and begin to awaken

Poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright William Carlos Williams has been one of the principal poets of the Imagist movement.

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**A LIST OF DON’TS for those beginning to write verses.**

Pay no attention to the criticism of men who have never themselves written a notable work. Consider the discrepancies between the actual writing of the Greek poets and dramatists, and the theories of the Graeco-Roman grammarians, concocted to explain their metres.  
  
**Language**  
  
Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something.  
  
Don’t use such an expression as “dim lands *of peace*.” It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer’s not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol.  
  
**Go in fear of abstractions. Don’t retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. Don’t think any intelligent person is going to be deceived when you try to shirk all the difficulties of the unspeakably difficult art of good prose by chopping your composition into line lengths.**  
What the expert is tired of today the public will be tired of tomorrow.  
  
Don’t imagine that the art of poetry is any simpler than the art of music, or that you can please the expert before you have spent at least as much effort on the art of verse as the average piano teacher spends on the art of music.  
  
Be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it.

Ηilda Doolittle **1886–1961**

**Oread**

Whirl up, sea—

whirl your pointed pines,

splash your great pines

on our rocks,

hurl your green over us,

cover us with your pools of fir.[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oread_(poem)#cite_note-3)

The title *Oread* (*cf.* [Oread](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oread)) was added after the poem was first written, to suggest that a [nymph](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nymph) was ordering up the sea.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48186/oread>

**Imagism,** the short-lived but influential movement officially in existence from 1913 until 1917, was launched in the tea shop of the British Museum in September of 1912. H.D. had given Pound three new poems, “[Epigram](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=12628),” “[Hermes of the Ways](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=12626),” and “[Priapus](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=12627)” (later titled “Orchard”), and he was impressed with their hardness, clarity, and intensity—the very qualities he associated with the best of poetic tradition and advocated for modern poetry. In End to Torment H.D. recalled the scene: “‘But Dryad,’ (in the Museum tea room), ‘this is poetry.’ He slashed with a pencil. ‘Cut this out, shorten this line. “Hermes of the Ways” is a good title. I’ll send this to Harriet Monroe of Poetry.’ And he scrawled ‘H.D. Imagiste’ at the bottom of the page.” H.D.’s recollection almost 50 years later captures the contradictory but crucial role Pound played in the construction of modern poetry. Ever the impresario, Pound was domineering, but generous; blunt, but fair; free with his editing pen, but unerringly sharp in his advice. No longer her fiancé entangling poetry with the demands of a lover, Pound was her greatest promoter. “The strangest thing,” H.D. later wrote, “is that Ezra was so inexpressibly kind to anyone who he felt had the faintest spark of submerged talent.” She was delighted to abandon her surname, which seemed, she later reflected, to mock her aspirations; “Do-little” was hardly an encouraging name for an ambitious young woman. However, the violence of his slashing pen in her description of his naming “H.D. Imagiste” suggests an ominous undertone in his support, as [Sandra Gilbert](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poet.html?id=2513), Susan Gubar, and Janice Robinson have suggested. His power to name, upon which her new identity depended, carried with it a threat to her autonomy as a creative artist, as she was later to explore in HERmione.  
Image of Hilda Doolittle Image of Hilda Doolittle Image of Hilda Doolittle