

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock Quotes

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Quotes

*"Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table."*

Explanation:

These opening lines set the mood of the poem. The evening, compared to an unconscious patient, shows the lifeless and paralyzed modern world. It introduces Prufrock's tired and numb feelings, reflecting spiritual emptiness and loss of vitality.

*"In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo."*

Explanation:

This repeated line reflects shallow social gatherings where people discuss art without genuine emotion. It illustrates Prufrock's alienation from cultured society and his inability to form meaningful connections with others.

*"There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet."*

Explanation:

Prufrock convinces himself that there is always time to act later. This repetition of "there will be time" shows his hesitation and fear of facing reality. The line also criticizes how people hide their true selves behind social masks.

*"Do I dare
Disturb the universe?"*

Explanation:

This line captures Prufrock's deep anxiety and self-doubt. He feels so insignificant that even a small act (like expressing love or opinion) seems as huge as "disturbing the universe." It represents the paralysis of the modern individual.

"I have measured out my life with coffee spoons."

Explanation: Here, Prufrock admits that his life has been ordinary and repetitive. The "coffee spoons" symbolize small, meaningless routines and his inability to live passionately or take bold steps.

*"I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker."*

Explanation:

Prufrock realizes he is not a heroic or prophetic figure. His chances of greatness have vanished. The flickering image expresses his lost confidence, spiritual weakness, and fear of death.

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

Explanation:

By denying likeness to Hamlet, Prufrock shows self-awareness and inferiority. Hamlet is bold and tragic; Prufrock is timid and ordinary. He sees himself as an "attendant lord," only fit to advise others, not to act decisively.

*"I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me."*

Explanation:

In this sad and final image, the mermaids symbolize beauty, passion, and imagination. Prufrock's belief that they will not sing to him reveals his sense of isolation and hopelessness. His dream of love and meaning remains unfulfilled.

LxNotes