

**Prompt:** Carefully choose any ONE poem from chapter 31 in our text, "Poems for Further Reading" (816-888)--with the exception of "Digging," by Seamus Heaney. Please do not write on this poem.

For this assignment, please discuss the diction in this poem. As necessary, apply some of the literary terms that are listed in this week's other discussion forum. Most important, explain how diction in this poem contributes to the meaning of the whole. (Two paragraphs).

NOTE: Choose your poem well. This is the poem that you will be writing on for the poetry essay in this class, due Friday, 7/13.

### **Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush"**

In his diction for the poem "The Darkling Thrush", Thomas Hardy uses concrete words nearly exclusively to describe a land which reflects the extremes of a harsh winter season. The speaker's environment is wholly devoid of beauty, with descriptions being provided through metaphoric words such as "spectre-gray", "crypt", and "fervorless". The first half of the poem is specific and narrow, while the second half—following the event of hearing the song of the thrush—becomes more general and expands to include something new and significant, but also intangible. A number of Germanic words are used—such as "dreg", "gaunt" and "hope"—as are many Latinate words, like "corpse", "lament" and "ecstatic". Overall, the diction comes across as formal instead of colloquial.

The words and terms employed by Hardy effectively convey the idea that the world is currently in a state of death and dying. The following lines emphasize this point: "The land's sharp features seemed to be / The Century's corpse outleant, / His crypt the cloudy canopy, / The wind his death-lament" (754). The proffered perspective is foreboding but specific. It is only interrupted by the bright and colorful sounds of the thrush: "An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small, / In blast-beruffled plume, / Had chosen thus to fling his soul / Upon the growing gloom" (754). The reader's perspective adjusts at this surprise, and he is then allowed to weigh this incredible beauty against the overwhelming bleak. Interpretations can be made as to what this represents, but it is important to note that Hardy associates the environment to the "Century's corpse" (754) and wrote the poem on the last day of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Re: The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. (by Adam Jones)**

Adam, here is a link to a reading of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot himself: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAO3QTU4PzY>. We covered this poem in ENGL13B last semester. When it came time to form an opinion on the piece and write a short response about it, I found that certain qualities became more apparent to me after hearing this recording. There are actually a number of these kinds of readings for this poem online, with different people offering unique renditions; you might enjoy some of them.

Hopefully this assists you in writing your essay. Good luck—it is a very unique piece of poetry.

**Re:**

*Quote*

Response