

(T. S. Eliot)

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar.

Shape without form, shade without colour, Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed

With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom

Remember us – if at all – not as lost

Violent souls, but only

As the hollow men

The stuffed men.

About the Poet

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888 – 1965) was a poet and critic. He settled in Britain. He is well-known for his great poems such as "The Waste Land" and "Four Quartets". He also wrote plays and contributed many critical essays.

Theme

The theme of the poem is that human beings have become soulless. They try to depend upon each other but they cannot make a society. All their efforts are like the running of rats or the rustling of grass. We do have shapes but inside there is nothing. We only seem to be walking souls but actually we are not even that.

Paraphrase

We are worthless men, either puppets or dolls. We try to rest upon each other and our minds are filled with no wisdom. We are not wise men. We live in dreams. We try to speak to each other but convey nothing. All our speech is no more than the voices made by the grass or the rats. We seem to have no form and no colour. We seem to have strength, but it is only the appearance of strength, otherwise we are weak and without motion. Those who have already departed from this life do not know if we are frustrated or not. We seem to be only puppets made of straw.

Glossary

hollow	having a hole or empty space inside, not solid
stuff	the material or substance out of which anything is or can be made; raw material
headpiece	a covering for the head
whisper	speak softly
cellar	underground room for storing things.

EXERCISES

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Cho	ose the c	orrect answer.			
i.	The	ooet calls men_	dud printednator		
	a)	hungry	b)	thirsty	
	c)	hollow	d)	cruel	
ii.	This poem has been written by				
	a)	Keats	b)	T. S. Eliot	
	c)	W. B. Yeats	d)	Byron	
iii.	The title of the poem is				
	a)	The Hollow M			
	b)	The Hollow N	/an		

The Hollow Woman.

The Hollow Women.

c)

d)

8.

	iv.	We convey							
		a)	nothing	b)	something				
		c)	anything	d)	a few words				
2.	Mark the statements true / false.								
	i.	We a	T/F						
	ii.	Wed	T/F						
	iii.	Shap	ith colour. T/F						
	iv.	Wed	T/F						
3.	Add two more rhyming words to each of the words given below.								
	i.	hollo	w	TO RESERVE	IE O ISOS DE DIMENTAL PORTILLO				
	ii.	glass							
	iii.	color	ur	Hayan 2	Haline weepleben, att. if				
	iv.	wind		An earl	graduation by				
4.	Write down the missing words in each verse.								
	i.	Wea	We are hollow						
		a)	men	b)	boys				
		c)	women	d)	girls				
	ii.	Orra	All medital productions of the						
		a)	table	b)	chair desired				
		c)	glass	d)	mirror				
					retime to want full ber ance				
	iii.	Remember us, if at all, not as							
		a)	lost	b)	found				
		c)	unwise	d)	hungry				
	iv.	Viol	artis especialment of the						
		a)	only	b)	really				
		c)	dead	d)	alive				
5.	Wri	ite a critical note on the poem.							
6.	Give	e a summary of the poem.							
7	Why	ny does the poet call modern men as hollow men?							

What does the poet say in the last stanza of the poem?

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