

3. Add your voice to the vast array of interpretations for the poem's closing three lines. In doing so, apply your creative thinking skills: Think boldly and freely and without censuring your thinking.

WRITING TOPIC

Does the claim you articulated apply exclusively to Prufrock, or would you extend it to apply generally to persons today? Write your own argument that either limits or extends the poem's claim; use evidence from the poem and your own experience to support your claim.

Jack Gilbert

Trying to Sleep (2005)

5 The girl shepherd on the farm beyond has been
 taken from school now she is twelve, and her life is over.
 I got my genius brother a summer job in the mills
 and he stayed all his life. I lived with a woman four
 years who went crazy later, escaped from the hospital,
 hitchhiked across America terrified and in the snow
 without a coat, and was raped by most men who gave her
 a ride. I crank my heart even so and it turns over.
 10 Ranges high in the sun over continents and eruptions
 of mortality, through winds and immensities of rain
 falling for miles. Until all the world is overcome
 by what goes up and up in us, singing and dancing
 and throwing down flowers as we continue north taking
 the maimed with us, keeping the sad parts carefully.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Gilbert lists examples of events that should be very discouraging, if not depressing, to anyone. However, he tells us, "I crank my heart even so and it turns over." What idea is he expressing through this metaphorical language? What does Gilbert mean by "crank" and "turn over"?
2. In a single sentence, state a claim the poet seems to be making about the human spirit. What are your thoughts about this perspective?

WRITING TOPIC

Consider the last words of the poem. How does the poet use the sad parts carefully to does a person's past do or her identify over time? What has taught you painful lessons? Who are you who you have become?

Judy Grahn

Ella, In a Square Apron,

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CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast the opening and closing lines of the poem.

WRITING TOPC

Consider the last words of the poem: "taking the maimed with us, keeping the sad parts carefully." What do these words mean to you? In what ways does a person's past disappointment and heartaches positively develop his or her identity over time? Can you identify an experience in your past that taught you painful lessons that have ultimately made a positive impact upon who you have become?

Judy Grahn

Ella, In a Square Apron, Along Highway 80 (1971)

She's a copperheaded waitress, tired and sharp-worded, she hides her bad brown tooth behind a wicked smile, and flicks her ass out of habit, to fend off the pass that passes for affection.	5
She keeps her mind the way men keep a knife—keen to strip the game down to her size. She has a thin spine, swallows her eggs cold, and tells lies.	10
She slaps a wet rag at the truck drivers if they should complain. She understands the necessity for pain, turns away the smaller tips, out of pride, and keeps a flask under the counter. Once, she shot a lover who misused her child.	15
Before she got out of jail, the courts had pounced and given the child away. Like some isolated lake, her flat blue eyes take care of their own stark bottoms. Her hands are nervous, curled, ready to scrape.	20
The common woman is as common as a rattlesnake.	

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast your response to the snake imagery in the poem's opening and closing lines.