

NAME: _____

PERIOD: _____

SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY



THIS PACKET WAS CREATED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THOMPSON'S ENGLISH CLASSES. ANY UNAUTHORIZED USE OR REDISTRIBUTION WILL RESULT IN A VISIT TO THE SPOON RIVER CEMETERY.

“The Hill”
from
Spoon River Anthology
by Edgar Lee Masters

WHERE are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozer, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,
One after life in far-away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and Mag—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

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Spoon River Anthology Review
(You'll need your list of Literary Terms and Definitions!)

Review the epitaph of Judge Somers (p. 18):

1. The epitaph of Judge Somers only contains one end punctuation mark. Grammatically, it is only a single interrogative sentence. Which literary device is illustrated by the sentence?

2. Who are "Blackstone and Coke"? (Use the glossary.)

3. The reference to these historical figures is an _____.

4. What bothers Judge Somers?

5. In the game, what tasks do you have to complete to put the spirit of Judge Somers at peace?

Review the epitaph of Chase Henry (p. 16):

6. Describe Chase Henry's voice in this epitaph. (How does he feel?)

7. Write an example of *alliteration* found in Chase Henry's epitaph.

8. What does Chase Henry want everyone to know?

9. From the context of this poem, you can tell that *redounded* means _____.

Review the epitaph of Editor Whedon (p. 90):

10. According to Editor Whedon, what kinds of things does a newspaper editor do?

11. What is the name of the literary device used throughout the epitaph by which the editor compares himself to one of the Greek actors who wore masks?

12. The first two lines of Editor Whedon's epitaph are an example of which literary device?

13. Where is Editor Whedon's grave located?

Review the epitaph of Carl Hamblin (p. 89):

14. What is Carl Hamblin's occupation?

15. Carl Hamblin's mention of the Anarchists who supported the striking labor unions is an example of _____.

16. According to Carl Hamblin, whom do the courts serve?

17. Ideally, who is punished by the "sword of justice"?

18. According to Carl Hamblin, what does the sword of justice actually do?

19. Is there any alliteration in Carl Hamblin's epitaph? (Circle one.)

Yes

No

20. In the game, what do you have to do to put the spirit of Carl Hamblin at peace?

Review the epitaph of The Town Marshall (p. 34):

21. Why did the prohibitionists make him the town marshal?

22. Why does the marshal think Jack McGuire got off with only 14 years for his murder?

Review the epitaph of Jack McGuire (p. 35):

23. How did Jack kill the Town Marshall?

24. Why is Jack moved to a jail in Peoria?

25. What is the real reason Jack McGuire got off with only 14 years for a murder sentence?

26. In the game, what do you have to do to put the spirit of Jack McGuire to rest?

Review the epitaphs of Ollie and Fletcher McGee (pp. 11 & 12):

27. What did Fletcher do to Ollie? How?

28. Who died first?

29. Lines 9-20 of Fletcher's epitaph are an example of what literary device?

30. In the game, what do you have to do to put the spirit of Ollie McGee to rest?

Review the epitaphs of Cooney Potter and Fiddler Jones (pp. 46 & 47):

31. How did Cooney Potter spend his life?

32. How did Fiddler Jones spend his life?

33. Why might many people consider Fiddler Jones a failure?

34. Why is Cooney Potter unhappy with the way things turned out for him?

35. In the game, what do you have to do to put the spirit of Cooney Potter to rest?

Review the epitaphs of Elsa Wertman and Hamilton Greene (p. 79):

35. What does Hamilton Greene not know?

36. In the game, what do you have to do to put the spirit of Elsa Wertman to rest?

37. What did Thomas Greene give to his wife to keep her from sharing the real story with the rest of the town?

Review the epitaphs of Amos Sibley and his wife (pp. 81 & 82):

38. Why does Amos Sibley not divorce his wife even though she cheats on him?

39. In the game, what do you have to do to put the spirit of Mrs. Sibley to rest?

Review the epitaph of Penniwit the Artist (p. 77) and answer this question:

40. Why does Penniwit not make money as a photographer in Spoon River?

41. In the game, how does Penniwit play into the issue that must be resolved for another character?

Roscoe Purkapile

SHE loved me. Oh! how she loved me!
I never had a chance to escape
From the day she first saw me.
But then after we were married I thought
She might prove her mortality and let me out,
Or she might divorce me.
But few die, none resign.
Then I ran away and was gone a year on a lark.
But she never complained. She said all would be well,
That I would return. And I did return. 10
I told her that while taking a row in a boat
I had been captured near Van Buren Street
By pirates on Lake Michigan,
And kept in chains, so I could not write her.
She cried and kissed me, and said it was cruel,
Outrageous, inhuman! 15
I then concluded our marriage
Was a divine dispensation
And could not be dissolved,
Except by death.
I was right.

1. Who is the **narrator**? What is the point of view?
2. What is the **tone**?
3. Circle examples of **figurative language** (and tell what kind in the margins).
4. Underline any **poetic devices** (and tell what kind in the margins).
5. What is a **theme** that the poem illustrates?

Mrs. Purkapile

HE ran away and was gone for a year.
When he came home he told me the silly story
Of being kidnapped by pirates on Lake Michigan
And kept in chains so he could not write me.
I pretended to believe it, though I knew very well
What he was doing, and that he met
The milliner, Mrs. Williams, now and then
When she went to the city to buy goods, as she said.
But a promise is a promise
And marriage is marriage,
And out of respect for my own character
I refused to be drawn into a divorce
By the scheme of a husband who had merely grown tired
Of his marital vow and duty. 10

6. Who is the narrator? What is the point of view?
7. What is the tone?
8. Circle examples of **figurative language** (and tell what kind in the margins).
9. Underline any **poetic devices** (and tell what kind in the margins).
10. What is a **theme** that the poem illustrates?
11. How does the **cross-reference** of the two poems help you understand the “whole story”?

Odysseus

Twenty long years!
Taken to fight a war for a faithless woman, forced to leave the faithful one behind, I left Ithaca, not knowing if I would ever see her shores again.
I devised the trick of the Trojan Horse, won the war, and Assured my fame as the wiliest of heroes.
But I missed my son's childhood, never saw him learn to hunt or fight or work as a man should before the gods of bliss.

In my many months at sea, I conquered Polyphemus, bored out his great eye and escaped his island;
I survived the grappling tentacled heads and razor teeth of Scylla and lost my ship to the gaping maw of Charybdis.
Heroic deeds which sent my fame abroad to the sky's rim.
But I lost my crew, my friends, my brothers in arms -- fools who feasted on the cattle of Lord Helios -- and great Zeus took from their eyes the dawn of their return.

When I finally returned home -- ragged, beaten, humbled -- I fought once again to regain my kingdom.
By Athena's grace, and in secret disguise, I plotted with my trusted servants and my newly met son, now a man with a beard on his chin.
Together we destroyed the suitors, without mercy, without fear.
Every last man who vied for my Penelope died in a river of his own blood.

My story is well known, full of glory and guile and courage.
The people look to me as a model of what a man should be.
I've earned a place in the hearts of the gods.

But I'd trade it all to have those twenty years at home with the wife who waited for me.

Penelope

They called me Queen of Ithaca,
but I never enjoyed the ease and pampering of royalty.
My husband, the hero about whom you have heard so much,
was gone for most of our marriage.
It was hard not to hate him, although I knew it wasn't his choice.

I raised our son alone, and he grew to be a noble man despite his absent father,
Who was off battling monsters and spending years with Goddesses to whom I cannot compare in beauty.
I held off the suitors for years, those pigs who would have stolen the throne of Odysseus and murdered his son.
They wanted the power of a king but they did not care for me any more than I cared for them.

I remained true.
I devised the test of the great bow, which allowed Odysseus to regain his throne, his kingdom, and his life.
(I knew all along who that beggar really was!)
But I am not remembered as a hero,
Only as the faithful wife:
The patient, long-suffering, steadfast Penelope.

If I had it all to do over again...
...I'd go with him to Troy.

I'll bet it wouldn't take us twenty years to get home, either.
I'm not ashamed to ask for directions.

About This Game

This interactive fiction game is based on Edgar Lee Master's collection of poems, The Spoon River Anthology. Each poem is an epitaph of someone from the fictional town of Spoon River. There are many connections and stories that can be discovered from a careful reading of the individual poems. This is a game about resolving conflicts and uncovering mysteries relating to these epitaphs. Solving these conflicts requires good reading and problem solving skills.

What is interactive fiction?

Interactive Fiction (or IF for short) is both a computer game and a book, or rather something in between. You usually take on the role of the main character in a story. The game tells you what happens to the character, and you tell the game how the character should act. This is not always simple, but can make for a very rewarding experience. The game's output is usually text based, and by typing text into the computer, allows you to communicate with the game.

Where does the game take place?

The game takes place in the Spoon River Cemetery and the town of Spoon River. Players will encounter ghosts and be able to read epitaphs throughout the game.

What can I as a player control?

You will be able to manipulate the game's environment in numerous ways by typing commands into the computer.

What is the main focus of this game?

The main goal of the game is to help the ghostly citizens of Spoon River find resolutions to issues that plagued their lives and left them in a restless state.



Movement

To move to a new location simply type the direction you want to move. You can type GO SOUTH, but just SOUTH will also do the trick, as will S (which is the commonly accepted abbreviation for SOUTH). Other directions and their abbreviations are NORTH (N), EAST (E), WEST (W), NORTHEAST (NE), SOUTHEAST (SE), NORTHWEST (NW), SOUTHWEST (SW), UP (U), DOWN (D), IN and OUT.

Common verbs

Here are some of the most important verbs, with examples:

LOOK or L (L or LOOK AROUND or LOOK IN JAR or LOOK UNDER BED)

TAKE (TAKE BOOK or TAKE ALL)

DROP (DROP BOOK or DROP ALL)

EXAMINE or X (EXAMINE DESK or X DESK)

SEARCH (SEARCH DESK)

INVENTORY or I (This will show what you are carrying with you.)

OPEN (OPEN DOOR)

CLOSE (CLOSE DOOR)

LOCK (LOCK DOOR WITH RUSTY KEY)

UNLOCK (UNLOCK DOOR WITH RUSTY KEY)

TALK (TALK TO BOB)

Other verbs you will need from time to time include ATTACK, DRINK, EAT, LISTEN, MOVE, PULL, PUSH, REMOVE, READ, SHOOT, SIT, STRIKE, THROW, TURN.

There are lots more. Hopefully they will seem natural to you when you need them.

Special verbs

UNDO Takes back the last move you made. You can do this multiple times.

QUIT or Q Ends the current game.

RESTART Starts the game over from the beginning.

SAVE Saves your current position to a file on disk.

RESTORE Loads a previously saved game position.

HELP Information about the game and its author and hints to some of the puzzles.

Getting stuck and unstuck

While playing IF, you will get stuck. If you feel that you can not get unstuck from the same spot, you can type HELP to see if there are any hints available. One more thing about playing interactive fiction: Make a map as you play. You are very likely to need it.

Cemetery Plot Fiddler Jones' Tombstone	Cemetery Plot Cooney Potter's Tombstone	Cemetery Plot Tombstone
Cemetery Plot Fletcher McGee's Tombstone	Cemetery Plot Amos Sibley's Tombstone	Cemetery Plot Mrs. Sibley's Tombstone
Cemetery Plot Ollie McGee's Tombstone	Fountain key	Cemetery Plot Editor Whedon's Tombstone
Cemetery Plot Hamilton Greene's Tombstone	Cemetery Plot Elsa Wertman's Tombstone	Cemetery Plot Penniwenet, the Artist's Tombstone
Cemetery Plot Town Marshal's Tombstone	Empty Spot	Cemetery Plot Jack McGuire's Tombstone

Epitaph Plan Sheet

Main Entry: **ep·i·taph**

Pronunciation: 'e-p&-'taf

Function: *noun*

Etymology: Middle English *epitaphe*, from Middle French & Medieval Latin; Middle French, from Medieval Latin *epitaphium*, from Latin, funeral oration, from Greek *epitaphion*, from *epi-* + *taphos* tomb

1 : an inscription on or at a tomb or a grave in memory of the one buried there

2 : a brief statement commemorating or epitomizing a deceased person or something past

In *Spoon River Anthology*, Edgar Lee Masters presents a series of poetic monologues as they appear on the gravestones in a Midwestern cemetery in the early 1900s. The characters speak their own epitaphs, often confessing the true motivations of their lives and uncovering many of the mysteries and secrets of the town. These epitaphs often appear in clusters that present all sides of a story that would otherwise be unclear or incomplete. Choose two characters from the literature we are currently studying and develop an epitaph for each. These epitaphs should portray the relationship between the characters. Use the outline below to get started.

Name of character		
Occupation or how majority of character's time was spent		
Details about character's death		
Significant life events		
Character's outlook on life or advice to those still living		
Hobbies and leisure time activities		
Describe the relationship between the two characters		
Feelings about the other character		
Other details: Physical characteristics, opinions, ideas, etc.		

How to Write an Epitaph

- Fill out the Epitaph Plan Sheet.
- Write the name of the character at the top of the page (i.e., the top of the "gravestone").
- Pretend that you are that character and are speaking from the great beyond. This is called writing in first person. You will use the pronoun I.
- Choose one of the details from your plan sheet that you (as the character) feel strongly about, and write a sentence about it. You might choose some feeling about someone with whom you had a relationship. Or you might write a sentence about how you died. You could also choose an event that was important as the subject of your first line of the epitaph. It's up to you.
- Once you have begun, continue letting the thoughts and strong emotions of the character come out. Remember in this type of epitaph you are telling only those thoughts and feelings that are so strong as to have you "speaking from your grave."
- Once you believe you are done, read over the epitaph (aloud, if possible). Make changes where necessary.
- Now go back and look for the poetic devices you were required to include. If they are there great! Identify them. If not discover what you need to add and look where you can fit these elements in or change your words to meet the requirements.
- Now make decisions about the physical arrangement of the words in lines. Do you want each sentence to be on one line? Do you want some words to be on a line by themselves for emphasis? Make conscious choices about where line breaks occur.
- Now create a final copy following the format requested by your teacher.

Sample:

Captain Beatty

I spent my life pretending to be the opposite of what I was:

A poet who burned Whitman on Wednesday,

A philosopher who incinerated Plato with grim pleasure,

A playwright who shunned Shakespeare.

Kerosene was my lifeblood, or so the others thought...if you call it thinking.

They never noticed how much I knew about the books we burned, thoughtless fools.

Then Montag did the favor of burning *me*: a final fitting irony, unless you know the truth.

I wanted to die.

A life of deception—ignoring the war while the world flung itself to pieces, smiling while the charred books died like slaughtered birds, lecturing in simple platitudes that

sounded so fresh to the ignorant and uninformed—left me in despair.

For where can hope be found in a world that burns all responsibility?

The Happiness Boys, we called ourselves.

They never suspected a thing.

No one knew me.

Poetry Terms*
Vocabulary Needed to Analyze (i.e., "Torture a Confession Out of") a Poem

Narrator: the person or “voice” telling the story or relating the description; the “speaker”

Point of view: the perspective from which the poem is presented

- **First person:** The speaker is a character in the poem and tells it from his/her own point of view.
- **Third person:** The speaker is not a character in the poem and tells of other characters or events from a separate (or omniscient) point of view.

Tone: the author’s (or narrator’s) feelings about the subject matter

Mood: the feeling the poem creates in the reader

Imagery: description that appeals to any of the five senses

Figurative Language: language that uses comparisons and non-literal meanings

- **Simile:** comparison that uses a specific word of comparison: *like, as, than*
- **Metaphor:** a comparison in which one thing is said to be another thing
- **Extended Metaphor:** a comparison that is carried throughout the poem as a unifying element
- **Personification:** a metaphor in which a non-human thing is given human characteristics
- **Symbol:** a thing that represents or suggests something besides or beyond itself
- **Irony:** incongruity between expectation and outcome
 - **Verbal:** words that suggest the opposite of their literal meaning (e.g., sarcasm)
 - **Situational:** when the opposite of what is expected happens
 - **Dramatic:** when the audience (reader, listener, viewer) knows something a character in work doesn’t know
- **Allusion:** implied or indirect reference (to an historical event or character, a work of art or literature, or anything supposed to be generally understood)

Poetic Devices

- **Alliteration:** repetition of initial consonant sounds
- **Assonance:** repetition of vowel sounds in lines of poetry
- **Repetition:** words, phrases, or ideas in a poem that are repeated
 - **Refrain:** a regularly recurring phrase or verse in a poem
- **Parallel Structure:** phrases or lines of similar construction found at various points in a poem
- **Rhyme:** two or more lines of poetry that have the same ending sounds
- **Rhetorical Question:** a question that does not require an answer; the effect is achieved just by asking the question
- **Analogy:** illustrating one idea through a more well-known idea, which has similarities to the first

Stanza: a group of lines in poetry that appear together, separated from other lines

Free Verse: poetry with no regular meter, rhyme, or line length

Cross-reference: a reference made in one literary work to an element that appears in another literary work.
(Poems in *Spoon River Anthology*, for example, cross-reference each other.)

Theme: A general statement about life that is illustrated by a poem or story

- not a moral
- not a piece of advice or a warning
- not an expression of right/wrong, good/bad
- must be stated as a complete sentence

*Hey, did you notice that many of these terms apply to ALL literature (stories, plays, novels, etc.), not just poetry?

Poetry Analysis: Torturing a Confession Out of a Poem*

Title of Poem _____ Poet _____

What is the **point of view** of the poem?

Who is the **narrator**? What do you know about him/her?

What is the **tone** of the poem? (How does the narrator feel about the subject matter?)

What **mood** is created by the poem? (How do you feel while reading/hearing the poem?)

Paraphrase/Overview: What happens in the poem?

Imagery: List the sensory images (visual, auditory, touch, taste, smell).

Figurative Language: List **similes, metaphors, personification, and symbols** that appear in the poem.

Poetic Devices: List examples of **alliteration, assonance, repetition, rhyme**.

Allusions: Identify any implied or indirect references in the poem.

Irony: Identify instances of verbal, situational, or dramatic irony in the poem.

Theme: Write a sentence (that does *not* state a moral, give advice, or identify right and wrong) that expresses a generalization about life that is supported by the poem.