

Allusion Analysis: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

An *allusion* is an indirect reference to another work. It is often a kind of appeal to a reader to share some kind of experience with the writer. For the allusions in the poem, complete the following assignments:

1. Explain the allusion. Where does it come from? What does it mean?
2. Apply your answer in #1 to the passage. How does the allusion add meaning to the passage? What does the allusion mean in the context of this passage?

1. *S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.*

2. "There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands"

3. "Though I have seen my head [grown slightly bald] brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet--and here's no great matter;"

4. "To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,"

5. To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"--

6. "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politick, cautious, and meticulous; "