

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: “The Lotos-Eaters”

- I. Based loosely on an incident from Homer’s *Odyssey*
 - A. Odysseus’s men land on the island of the lotus eaters and are tempted to stay
 - B. They are weary from their long years in the Trojan War
 - C. And also from their years of wandering
- II. The theme of weariness
 - A. It is always afternoon
 - B. The scene is unchanging and dreamy: “all things always seem’d the same!”
 - C. The smoke and stream always flow *downward*, as if they are heavy
 - D. Sailors are content to dream of home, children, and wives, but have no ambition to return to them
 - E. “Let us alone” is a recurring phrase
 - F. Living in memory is enough for the sailors
 - G. They rationalize that there is no reason to return, because the hearths are probably cold, and their sons have already inherited
 - H. Confusion is worse for them than death
 - I. In Homer’s account, Odysseus rouses the men, but in Tennyson’s adaptation, they remain on the island
 - J. They find something god-like in reclining all day, with a spirit of indifference toward their real lives so remote