

In the first section of the poem, a bunch of Hollow Men are leaning together like scarecrows. Everything about them is as dry as the Sahara Desert, including their voices and their bodies. Everything they say and do is meaningless. They exist in a state like Hell, except they were too timid and cowardly to commit the violent acts that would have gained them access to Hell. They have not crossed over the River Styx to make it to either Heaven or Hell. The people who have crossed over remember these men as "hollow men." In the second section, one hollow man is afraid to look at people who made it to "death's dream kingdom" – either Heaven or Hell. The Hollow Men live in a world of broken symbols and images. The third section of the poem describes the setting as barren and filled with cacti and stones. When the Hollow Men feel a desire to kiss someone, they are unable to. Instead, they say prayers to broken stones. In the fourth section, the hollow man from Section 2 continues to describe his vacant, desolate surroundings, in which are no "eyes." The Hollow Men are afraid to look at people or to be looked at. The fifth and final section the speaker describes how a "shadow" has paralyzed all of their activities, so they are unable to act, create, respond, or even exist.