

Explication of *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*

- I. Cover sheet with title and author of poem, your name, date, and period.
- II. Author information: life, work, “style, themes, major contributions, etc.
- III. Copy of poem
- IV. Line-by-line paraphrase

1st paragraph:

1. Explain the title
2. Who is the speaker? What kind of person is he/she?
3. To whom is he/she speaking? What kind of person is he/she (‘audience’)?
4. What is the setting in time and place? (hour, season, century, indoors or out, city or country, land or sea, region, country, etc.)

2nd paragraph:

1. Central purpose- why was this poem written?
2. State the central idea or theme in a sentence.
3. What is the tone and how does the poet achieve it?
4. Describe the structure of the poem. Why did the poet arrange it this way?
5. What is the meter of the poem?

3rd paragraph:

1. Discuss the diction of the poem. Point out words that are particularly well-chosen and explain why.
2. Point out significant examples of sound devices, including assonance, consonance, alliteration, and explain their function.

4th paragraph:

1. Discuss the imagery of the poem. Identify images and what senses they affect.
2. Point out examples of metaphor, simile, and personification and explain their meaning.
3. Point out and explain any symbols and allusions.
4. Point out and explain any examples of irony or over- or understatement. What is their function in the poem?

5th paragraph:

Discuss the meaning of the poem, on as many levels as you can.

6th Paragraph:

Discuss how this poem fits into or is representative of its literary period (research this).

7th Paragraph:

Criticize and evaluate the poem. Explain and prove to yourself why it is bad, good, or great. If it is only good, what is it lacking to make it great? Good poems have importance and a purpose which is achieved. Great poems engage the imagination.