

Name: _____ Class: _____

A Dream Within a Dream

By Edgar Allen Poe
1849

Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849) was an American author, poet, and literary critic whose works are still widely read today. His lyric poem "A Dream Within a Dream" was written in the 1820s, but it was not published until shortly before his death. In this poem, the narrator contemplates his life and his past. As you read, take notes on what the speaker questions.

- [1] Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow¹ —
You are not wrong, who deem²
- [5] That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone*?
- [10] *All* that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.



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- I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
- [15] Grains of the golden sand —
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep — while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
- [20] Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

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1. **Avow (verb):** to assert or confess openly
2. **Deem (verb):** to judge or consider in a specific way

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which sentence best describes a theme of the poem? [RL.2]
 - A. Our loved ones usually leave us.
 - B. Nothing in life is permanent.
 - C. It is important to hold on to your dreams.
 - D. We cannot slow the passage of time.

2. PART B: Which lines from the poem best support the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. "Thus much let me avow — / You are not wrong, who deem" (Lines 3-4)
 - B. "And I hold within my hand / Grains of the golden sand" (Lines 14-15)
 - C. "Through my fingers to the deep, / While I weep — while I weep!" (Lines 17-18)
 - D. "O God! I cannot save / One from the pitiless wave" (Lines 21-22)

3. PART A: What is the meaning of the word "vision" as used in line 8? [RL.4]
 - A. a spirit
 - B. a dream
 - C. the future
 - D. a beautiful person

4. PART B: Which lines from the poem best support the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. "You are not wrong, who deem / That my days have been a dream" (Lines 4-5)
 - B. "Yet if hope has flown away / In a night, or in a day" (Lines 6-7)
 - C. "Is it therefore the less gone?" (Line 9)
 - D. "All that we see or seem / Is but a dream within a dream." (Lines 10-11)

5. How does the division of the poem into two stanzas contribute to its meaning? [RL.5]
