

Directions: Carefully read the poem. Then, highlight and thoroughly annotate four lines that relate to the central idea of the poem.



Attack on the Ad-Man

Arthur Seymour John Tessimond

This trumpeter of nothingness, employed
 To keep our reason dull and null and void.
 This man of wind and froth and flux will sell
 The wares of any who reward him well.
 Praising whatever he is paid to praise,
 He hunts for ever-newer, smarter ways
 To make the gilt seen gold; the shoddy, silk;
 To cheat us legally; to bluff and bilk
 By methods which no jury can prevent
 Because the law's not broken, only bent.

This mind for hire, this mental prostitute
 Can tell the half-lie hardest to refute;
 Knows how to hide an inconvenient fact
 And when to leave a doubtful claim unbacked;
 Manipulates the truth but not too much,
 And if his patter needs the Human Touch,
 Skillfully artless, artlessly naive,
 Wears his convenient heart upon his sleeve.

He uses words that once were strong and fine,
 Primal as sun and moon and bread and wine,
 True, honorable, honored, clear and keen,
 And leaves them shabby, worn, diminished,
 mean.

He takes ideas and trains them to engage
 In the long little wars big combines wage...
 He keeps his logic loose, his feelings flimsy;
 Turns eloquence to cant and wit to whimsy;
 Trims language till it fits his clients, pattern
 And style's a glossy tart or limping slattern.

He studies our defenses, finds the cracks
 And where the wall is weak or worn, attacks.
 He finds the fear that's deep, the wound that's
 tender,

And mastered, outmaneuvered, we surrender.
 We who have tried to choose accept his choice
 And tired succumb to his untiring voice.
 The dripping tap makes even granite soften
 We trust the brand-name we have heard so often
 And join the queue of sheep that flock to buy;
 We fools who know our folly, you and I.