

Ulysses

By

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- Published in 1842 in a collection of poetry, that secured Tennyson's literary fame.
- However the poem was written nine years earlier, following the death of Arthur Henry Hallam.
- It is a seventy line poem written in blank verse. It is a dramatic monologue where Ulysses addresses the audience.
- It is based on the mythical hero, Odysseus from Homer's Odyssey (Ulysses is the Latin form of the name), but Tennyson also drew upon Dante's Inferno, Canto XXVI, in which Dante is led by the Roman epic poet Virgil to meet Ulysses and hear his tale. In Homer, Odysseus is told by the blind prophet Tiresias that he will return home to Ithaca but will make one more journey to a land far away from home. In Dante, this part of the story is elaborated. Ulysses gathers his men together to prepare for the journey and exhorts them not to waste their time left on earth. Ulysses dies on this journey, which is why he is in Dante's Hell. Tennyson's character is somewhere in between these literary predecessors, as Ulysses knows he will set off on a last journey but has not done so yet.
- Tennyson's hero, Ulysses, is now old, having experienced all the adventures of battle at Troy and elsewhere throughout his odyssey. But back at home, he is not contented