

Directions: Please carefully read the following poem. Then, in your group, please discuss each of the group discussion questions. Please discuss in depth! Then, on a separate piece of paper, please individually write out your own answers to the questions.

Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean-favored and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed, 5
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good Morning!" and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich, yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace: 10
In fine -- we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked and waited for the light,
And went without the meat and cursed the bread,
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night, 15
Went home and put a bullet in his head.

--E.A. Robinson, 1920

Group discussion questions (no written answers needed)

1. What are the differences between Richard Cory and the people in the poem?
2. What do the people in the poem have that Richard Cory does not?
3. Why did Richard Cory go home one calm summer night and “put a bullet in his head” (16)?

Individual questions (to write out answers on separate paper)

1. Identify 5 words in the poem that Robinson uses to characterize Richard Cory, and for each, explain what additional meaning(s) that word has in the poem.
2. Why do you think the people in the poem “cursed the bread” (14)?
3. What is meant by the statement “he glittered when he walked” (8)?
4. Where does Richard Cory live? Why is this significant?
5. What do you think the people in the poem are likely to say after finding out that Richard Cory was dead? Why?