

Poetic Form

ELEGY

Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” is one of the most famous English elegies. An **elegy** is an extended meditative poem in which the speaker reflects on death—often in tribute to a person who has died recently—or on an equally serious subject. Most elegies are written in formal, dignified language and are serious in mood and tone. Consider these lines from Gray’s poem, which describe a cemetery:

*Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree’s shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.*

Directions: In the chart, record details about who the dead are, why the speaker pays tribute to them, and observations about death. One example has been done for you.

Who the Dead Are	Why the Speaker Praises Them	Observations About Death
The forefathers of the hamlet “sleep” in their narrow graves.		

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD