

**“An Ancient Gesture”** by Edna St. Vincent Millay  
**“Siren Song”** by Margaret Atwood  
**“Prologue” and “Epilogue” from the *Odyssey*** by Derek Walcott  
**“Ithaca”** by Constantine Cavafy

## Literary Analysis: Comparing Tone

The four poems in this section are contemporary interpretations of Homer’s *Odyssey*. Each writer takes a particular attitude toward the *Odyssey*. This attitude is commonly known as the **tone** of a literary work. A writer’s tone often can be described by a single adjective, such as *joyful* or *somber*. In order to identify the tone of a poem, consider how the writer feels about the subject of his or her poem. Pay attention to the words, phrases, and details the writer uses and the feelings that these words, phrases, and details reveal.

**DIRECTIONS:** In the following chart, examine each poem’s tone. Reread each poem. As you read, identify the words, phrases, and details that reveal each writer’s attitude toward the characters and events in Homer’s epic poem. Then describe the tone of each poem. Be sure to support your ideas. The first one has been done for you.

Poem	Words, Phrases, and Details	Tone of Poem
1. "An Ancient Gesture"	wiped my eyes; arms tired; neck tight; burst into tears; Penelope, who really cried	The poem is sad and angry. Millay seems to feel that women are always put in a position of pain and suffering, whereas men only pretend to feel those emotions for other ends.
2. "Siren Song"		
3. "Prologue" and "Epilogue" from the <i>Odyssey</i>		
4. "Ithaca"		