

## H. D. (HILDA DOOLITTLE)

### “SEA ROSE”

This handout was prepared by Dr. William Tarvin, a retired professor of literature. Please visit my free website [www.tarvinlit.com](http://www.tarvinlit.com). Over 500 works of American and British literature are analyzed there for free.

**An ANSWER KEY is provided at the end of this handout (p. 2).**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961), who always published under her initials (H. D.), is an Imagist poet. The Imagists sought to build a poem around an image or a series of images, not a message, a narrative, or even a feeling. Readers are usually left to infer if any of these are present in the imagist poem.

2. Born in America, H. D. spent most of her poetic career in England, where she had close relationships, often ending unhappily, with Ezra Pound and D. H. Lawrence, among others.

## II. “SEA ROSE”

1. The poem contrasts the “sea rose” with the “\_\_\_\_\_ rose” (6) and the “\_\_\_\_\_ -rose” (14), presumably land-based roses.

2. The sea rose is “\_\_\_\_\_” (1), has few petals and \_\_\_\_\_ (2, 4), is “stunted” (9), and gives off an “\_\_\_\_\_” (14, stinging) odor.

3. Unlike firmly planted, land-based roses, the sea rose is “caught in the \_\_\_\_\_ [of the ocean]” (8) and is “\_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_” (10).

4. The poet may be suggesting that the “\_\_\_\_\_ rose,” through its being buffeted about, has earned its identity, while the spicy land roses have been gifted their identity.

5. Some critics carry this last interpretation further and proclaim the sea rose as a symbol of \_\_\_\_\_’s own life, where many people took her up (as friend, lover, etc.), only to \_\_\_\_\_ her aside.

**ANSWER KEY**

II.

1. wet; spice.
2. harsh; leaves; acrid.
3. drift; flung; sand.
4. sea.
5. H. D.; cast.