

Student 2

High Merit

Three times the wraith escaped the vain clasp of my hands like airy winds or the melting of a dream.

A simile is a comparison of an object or scene with figurative images. In this instance Virgil compares Aeneas' failed attempt to grasp the ghost of his wife with hopelessly trying to capture the air or hold on to a fading dream - one is as impossible as the other (1). This simile not only demonstrates the absolute futility of this particular act for Aeneas but also the futility of clinging to his old life in Troy and pursuing the more comfortable lifestyle of his past(2). Aeneas must now fully accept his task to escape with his father and son and found a new city in a new land (3). It is apparent to both the reader and Aeneas that his efforts to embrace his wife are as pointless as trying to grasp "airy winds" or escape his future but in desperation he continues (4). In expressing this desperation Virgil shows the reader the gravity of Aeneas' loss and we pity him for it (5).