**Excerpt from *A Journal of the Plague Year* (p. 557)**

1) \*\* Journal = personal account/record of events

(different fm diary bec. fewer feelings)

\*\* 1665-1666, bubonic plague, Black Death

\*\* Death everywhere (London & suburbs), people off streets out of fear of contracting it, can hear cries thru houses, p. sad for friends and fear for self

\*\* At beg., more compassionate, end more hard-hearted (numb) bec. of seeing so much horror (remember Macbeth?) Whitechapel hardest hit.

2) \*\* Narrator out in streets, sees big pit (40x16x9, later x20feet); curiosity; found more than 1 pit (LOTS of death); smaller pits, 50-60 bodies a week; later 200-400 a week; carts/trailer full of bodies; law said had to bury 6 feet deep due to spread of disease, fear of sanitation issues, bodies being washed or dug up; cannot be buried in water (at abt. 16 ft. under) due to contamination

3) \*\* MASSIVE PIT (GULF) built near church, thought to last a month, but filled up after just 2 weeks, over 1000 bodies buried

4) \*\* narrator’s morbid curiosity led him to want to see the pit at night while bodies being dumped; law against going bec of fear of spreading disease, and wanting to keep order as some sick p. were known to throw selves to await death instead of being put on cart and tossed in.

5) \*\* Narrator says no words can adequately express/describe what has happened here, too horrific, too DREADFUL

6) Church people deal with the dead, part of their job and their compassion for people; sexton (caretaker) lets narrator in and tells him he has no reason other than curiosity to see pit and warns against it. Says it will be “a sermon” for him, that it would be a “speaking sight” (PARADOX, OXYMORON). Will be a spiritual experience, will learn something important from it. The sight will touch his soul, need to analyze own self and get right w/God for when he dies (like bell tolling idea)

7) Narrator wavers, reconsidering going in, sees the dead cart coming, curiosity up again, goes in. As cart gets close to pit, sees a man cloaked in brown, in agony, groaning (they thought he was either infected, trying to get up courage to throw self in or crazy – neither true). Man’s wife and kids in dead cart (deep sorrow), wanted to see them buried, disturbed by indecency of it (bodies dumped from cart and dirt immediately put over), groaned loudly, then fainted. Buriers took him to tavern where he was known and they took care of him.

8) Worse sight in cart. 15-16 bodies, some wrapped in sheets, some partially clothed, some naked; very humiliating for narrator to see. States “common grave of mankind” – in the grave is no difference – rich, poor, we all DIE. We should analyze self and get ready for death.