The repetition of the ice cubes draws the audience’s attention:
1. “Fresh ice cubes...” (1).
2. “...ice cubes tinkled against the side” (1).
3. “...ice cubes falling against the bottom of the empty glass...” (1).

On the Rocks:
1. ice used to chill an alcoholic beverage
2. Mary and Patrick’s relationship is in imminent danger, like
3. a ship with a broken hull, trapped in shallow water

The repetition of the image of the ice cubes leads to the identification of foreshadowing: Mary and Patrick’s marriage is destined for a break-up. The repetition leads the audience to identify the implied idiom (the title of the story is an idiom, which is considered a dead metaphor because we no longer imagine the comparison and the imagery it should inspire us to feel because of its traditional over-usage) on the rocks, and that they should question any tradition they are currently blindly following—like a lamb—to their own suffering. Following tradition without question can lead to an ironic loss of identity, as the entire reason Patrick and Mary were married appears to be a result of gender roles linked to the cult of domesticity that convinced women to be subservient to the men who provided for them. The lack of personality that results from individuality appears to have caused boredom for Patrick and led him to end their relationship. The heaviest irony—a result of the expectations built by tradition and the author—is that Mary appears to be the perfect housewife, yet Patrick is “tired” of her and her routine and inspires a change.