
11:2—Questions: Victorian Poetry

Alfred, Lord Tennyson
“Crossing the Bar”

1. The “moaning of the bar” refers literally to the moaning sound that the wind and waves create by moving across a sandbar at the mouth of a harbor. What figurative meaning could the “moaning of the bar” (line 3) have here?

2. For what kind of death does the speaker seem to be wishing?

3. What is “that which drew from out the boundless deep” (line 7)? Why is “Pilot” (line 15) capitalized?

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Robert Browning

“Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister”

1. Who is the speaker, and whom does he appear to hate?

2. What, if any, are the reasons that the speaker hates this particular person?

3. In stanza three, the speaker suggests that his enemy’s “lily snaps” (line 24), meaning that his enemy’s apparent “lily-white” virtue and holiness is ruined. What does the speaker suggest his enemy has done to “snap” his virtue?

4. List at least three distinct ways the speaker hopes to lure his enemy into damnation.
