

Questions for *The Seafarer*

1. Are there similarities between the ideas expressed in this poem and those of *The Wanderer*? What and Why?
2. What is the seafarer's life like and what kind of man is he?
3. How are the sentiments of the Seafarer similar to those of the Wanderer? How are they different?
4. Has the Seafarer chosen to live his life as he does? What makes you believe he did? What makes you believe he might not have?
5. What does the Seafarer say about normal men—what are they like—how do they differ from the Seafarer?
6. How is both God and Nature important to the Seafarer and his understanding of the world?

Questions for "The Wanderer"

1. Find and explain the importance of several of the Anglo-Saxon sentiments in the poem?
2. What is the plight of the wanderer "earth-walker"? How did he become what he is? What is he seeking?
3. Do you see some Christian elements blending with the warrior-like beliefs? Where? What?
4. What does the Wanderer's philosophizing about horses and young warriors result in? What is the answer to his despair?
5. Elegies normally are not considered to have plots. Can this poem be read as having signs of internal conflict, however? Discuss this idea.
6. The term translated as "fate" at the end of the first paragraph is the Anglo-Saxon word wyrd. How does knowing the original meaning of this word alter our understanding of the opening lines?
7. In the fourth paragraph, several kennings appear. What do you suppose the kenning "gold-friend" means? What about the compound "winter-sad"?
8. What is the paradox about the companion of a man with no protectors? Who (or what personified abstraction) is his cruel companion?
9. What does the wanderer dream of when he falls asleep? What does he discover when he awakens?
10. What does the setting appear to be? (I.e., where is the Wanderer if he has to stir with his arms "the frost-cold sea" and he awakens to see "yellow waves" where "the sea-birds bathe"?)
11. What are the traits of the "wise man" in Anglo-Saxon thinking, as indicated by this poem?
12. Many critics read the last lines as a bit of Christian propaganda. Where does the poet suggest the Wanderer can find comfort and stability?

