

Poets & Texts

Alfred Lord Tennyson

"Crossing the Bar"

Sunset and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell,

When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

When I have crossed the bar.

LECTURE NOTES:

1- Tennyson's Life:

-He was born in 1809, to a family consists of 12 children.

-He is talented to write by twelve years old his first epic poem that consists of 6,000 lines.

- He with his brother, Charles, attended Trinity College , Cambridge in 1827. They published a book called *Poems by Two Brothers*. There he befriended with another student, Arthur Hallam with whom he made brief but intense friendship.. after Hallam death, Tennyson devoted many poems for his memory like his " In Memoriam". that bring success and solidify his fame in England.

-He published two books from 1830 to 1832. These books were not appreciated well by the critics. Being shy in nature , he stopped publishing for nine years.

-He finally made success in 1842 after the publication of this book, *Poems* in two volumes. When Tennyson published *In Memoriam*, That same year he married Emily Sellwood, with whom he would have two sons.

-His popularity and success allows him to have comfortable life and purchase a home in the country. He died in 1892 and remains one of the most popular Victorian poets.

THE POEM:

1-Summary:

The speaker witnesses the end of the day through announcing the the setting of the sun and the rise of the evening star. The exterior images of departure and death are integrated with the interior wish to finalize his years. He hears a call that encourage him to leave the world. The speaker wishes to have quiet circumstance for departure. He hopes that the ocean will not make the mournful sound of waves beating against a sand bar when he sets out to sea. Rather, he wishes for a tide that is so full that it cannot contain sound or foam and therefore seems asleep when all that has been carried from the boundless depths of the ocean returns back out to the depths.

He speaks clearly when he determine or prepare the state of his death. . He hopes that no one will cry when he departs, because although he may be carried beyond the limits of time and space as we know them, he retains the hope that he will look upon the face of his “Pilot” when he has crossed the sand bar.

2-Form:

It consists of four quatrains, rhyming ABAB. The first and the third stanzas are shorter than the second and the forth.

3- Important Notes:

-“Crossing the Bar” is written in 1889, three years before he died.

-It describes his placid and accepting attitude toward death.

- Though “Crossing the Bar” is not his final poem, he requests to be the final poem in all collections of his work

4- Thematic connections between these stanzas:

- Both the 1st and 3rd stanzas begin with symbol of onset: " sunset" and "twilight" that refer to the ending of the day .

-The second line of both stanzas begin with "and" to join another item that does not fit together.

-Both the second lines end with exclamation mark to express alarm and release what death entail.

-These stanzas conclude with a wish to have a quiet death.

-Fourth and second stanzas are linked because both begin with qualifier" but"" for".

5- Images of death:

The poem contains many images that refer to death like: sunset, the rise of the evening, the evening star, call, the evening bell, farewell, twilight, the dark and so on.

6- Metaphor :

- " a sand bar" that represents the barrier between life and death.
- "crossing," that refers to both the Christian crossing and crossing over" into the next world,