

Beowulf Test

New Material: Read the following Anglo-Saxon poem and answer the questions that follow.

The Seafarer

Translated by J. Duncan Spaeth

The Old Sailor:

True is the tale that I tell of my travels,
Sing of my seafaring sorrows and woes;
Hunger and hardship's heaviest burdens,
Tempest and terrible toil of the deep,
Daily I've borne on the deck of my boat. 5
Fearful the welter of waves that encompassed me,
Watching at night on the narrow bow,
As she drove by the rocks, and drenched me with spray.
Fast to the deck my feet were frozen,
Gripped by the cold, while care's hot surges 10
My heart o'erwhelmed, and hunger's pangs
Sapped the strength of my sea-weary spirit.
Little he knows whose lot is happy,
Who lives at ease in the lap of the earth,
How, sick at heart, o'er icy seas, 15
Wretched I ranged the winter through,
Bare of joys, and banished from friends,
Hung with icicles, stung by hailstones,
Nought I heard but the hollow boom
Of wintry waves, or the wild swan's whoop. 20
For singing I had the solan's scream;
For peals of laughter, the yelp of the seal;
The sea mew's cry, for the mirth of the mead hall.
Shrill through the roar of the shrieking gale
Lashing along the sea cliff's edge, 25
Pierces the ice-plumed petrel's defiance,
And the wet-winged eagle's answering scream.
Little he dreams that drinks life's pleasure,
By danger untouched in the shelter of towns,
Insolent and wine-proud, how utterly weary 30
Oft I wintered on open seas.
Night fell black, from the north it snowed
Harvest of hail.

The Youth:

Oh, wildly my heart
Beats in my bosom and bids me to try 35
The tumble and surge of seas tumultuous,
Breeze and brine and the breakers' roar.
Daily, hourly, drives me my spirit
Outward to sail, far countries to see.

Liveth no man so large in his soul, 40
So gracious in giving, so gay in his youth,
In deeds so daring, so dear to his lord,
But frets his soul for his sea adventure,
Fain to try what fortune shall send.
Harping he needs not, nor hoarding of treasure; 45
Nor woman can win him, nor joys of the world.
Nothing does please but the plunging billows;
Ever he longs, who is lured by the sea.
Woods are abloom, the wide world awakens,
Gay are the mansions, the meadows most fair; 50
These are but warnings, that haste on his journey
Him whose heart is hungry to taste
The perils and pleasures of the pathless deep.

The Old Sailor:

Dost mind the cuckoo mournfully calling?
The summer's watchman sorrow forbodes. 55
What does the landsman that wantons in luxury,
What does he reck the rough sea's foe,
That cares of the exile, whose keep has explored
The uttermost parts of the ocean ways!

The Youth:

Sudden my soul starts from her prison house, 60
Soareth afar o'er the sounding main;
Hovers on high, o'er the home of the whale;
Back to me darts the bird sprite and beckons,
Winging her way o'er woodland and plain,
Hungry to roam, and bring me where glisten 65
Glorious tracts of glimmering foam.
This life on land is lingering death to me,
Give me the gladness of God's great sea. 68

1. Line one contains an example of:
 - A. alliteration.
 - B. metaphor.
 - C. simile.
 - D. hyperbole.
2. The pronoun "she" in line eight refers to the:
 - A. ocean.
 - B. earth.
 - C. ship.
 - D. Sailor.

3. “Little he knows whose lot is happy, / Who lives at ease in the lap of the earth,”
The best explanation of the above lines is:
- Experiencing happiness requires living a life of ease.
 - A happy man understands very little because he has never experienced hardships.
 - A sad man understands nothing because he has nothing pleasant in his life.
 - Living a life of luxury is the best way to be happy.
4. In line 60, “prison house” is an example of:
- alliteration.
 - parallel structure.
 - accented beat.
 - kenning.
5. The tone of the poem is:
- happy and joyous.
 - optimistic and pessimistic.
 - melancholy and sad.
 - A and B only.
6. With which speaker in “The Seafarer” would Beowulf most identify?
- the youth
 - the old sailor
7. In “The Seafarer” the journey at sea is compared to:
- the four seasons.
 - a dream.
 - a trip over land.
 - a journey of life.
8. The old sailor’s seafaring sorrows and woes consist of:
- frozen feet.
 - lack of camaraderie of the mead hall.
 - hunger
 - all of the above.
 - none of the above.
9. The young sailor says that life on land to him is like:
- being held captive.
 - being with his parents.
 - being in heaven.
 - being in love.

New Material: Read the following poem about the epic hero Odysseus (Ulysses is his Roman name) and answer the questions that follow.

“Ulysses” by Alfred Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,*
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws* unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees*: all times I have enjoyed
 Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
 Through scudding* drifts the rainy Hyades 10
 Vest the dim sea: I am become a name;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known; cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honored of them all; 15
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers;
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy*.
 I am part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
 Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades 20
 For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
 As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life
 Were all to little, and of one to me 25
 Little remains: but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the scepter and the isle-
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill 35
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and through soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet* adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail: 45
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me-
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads- you and I are old;
 Old age had yet his honor and his toil; 50
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep 55
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows*; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
 Of all the western stars*, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles*,
 And see the great Achilles*, whom we knew.
 Though much is taken, much abides; and though 65
 We are not now that strength which in the old days

Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal-temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

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2 barren crags: here, the rugged landscape of Ithaca, the Greek island where Ulysses lives

4 unequal laws: rewards and punishments

7 lees: sediment found at the bottom of wine and other liquids; to “drink to the lees” is to drink to the last drop.

10 scudding: wind-driven; Hyades: a cluster of stars; when they rose, it was believed that rain would soon follow

16-17 battle ... Troy: the Trojan War, which the Greeks won after a ten-year siege

42 meet: fitting; proper

59 sounding furrows: crashing waves

60-61 baths ... stars: reference to the ancient belief that the stars descended into a sea or river that encircled the earth.

63 Happy Isles: in Greek mythology, the place where mortals favored by the gods are sent to dwell after they die

64 Achilles: the greatest warrior in the Greek assault on Troy

10. The attitude Ulysses shows toward yet another voyage is best described as:
- A. anxious anticipation
 - B. reckless jubilation
 - C. fearful hesitation
 - D. realistic eagerness
11. Ulysses’ negative attitude toward his present life reflected in lines 1-5 is expressed in all of the following **EXCEPT**:
- A. “idle king”
 - B. “barren crags”
 - C. “aged wife”
 - D. “little profits”
12. The use of metaphor to describe Ulysses’ life is best depicted by:
- A. “Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough / Gleams that untraveled world”
 - B. “I am become a name”
 - C. “How dull it is to pause, to make an end, / To rust unburnished, not to shine in use”
 - D. “For always roaming with a hungry heart / Much have I seen and known”
13. Ulysses’ resentment of his time spent in Ithaca is best reflected by:
- A. “I have enjoyed / Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those / That love me, and alone”
 - B. “Vile it were / For some three suns to store and hoard myself, / And this gray spirit yearning in desire / To follow knowledge like a sinking star, / Beyond the utmost bound of human thought”
 - C. “This is my son, mine own Telemachus, / To whom I leave the scepter and the isle- / Well-loved of me”
 - D. “Old age had yet his honor and his toil”
14. Tennyson makes use of which devices in the lines “It may be that the gulfs will wash us down: / It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles”?
- A. Allusion
 - B. Alliteration
 - C. Simile
 - D. Personification

15. What does the poem “Ulysses” have in common with the epic poem *Beowulf*?
- A. Both depict the failures of a hero to protect his people.
 - B. Both depict the successes of a hero and his constant hunger for more glory.
 - C. Both depict all the parts of the heroic genre cycle.
 - D. Both depict the fall of a hero.

Historical Questions

16. The dates of the Anglo-Saxon period are:
- A. AD 1600-1900
 - B. AD 1900-2000
 - C. AD 449-1066
 - D. AD 3020-5555
17. What are the names of the three tribes that invaded England during the Anglo-Saxon period?
- A. The Iberians, Saxons, and Celts
 - B. The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes
 - C. The Romans, Celts, and Angles
 - D. The Saxons, Celts, and Jutes
18. A *scop* is person who did what during the Anglo-Saxon period?
- A. Sing and perform epic poems
 - B. Repair weapons after battles
 - C. Care for the horses of the soldiers
 - D. Created the Runic alphabet
19. The language of the Anglo-Saxon period was which of the following?
- A. Middle English
 - B. Modern English
 - C. Ancient English
 - D. Old English

Match the following lines from *Beowulf* with the best choice of an Anglo-Saxon admired trait. Each answer will only be used once.

- A. Generosity
- B. Boasting
- C. Loyalty to tribe and leader
- D. *Wyrd*
- E. Physical strength
- AB. Warrior society (bubble both A and B together)

20. “My days...
Have gone as fate will, waiting
For its word to be spoken.”
21. “But Higlac’s follower remembered his final
Boast and, standing erect, stopped
The monster’s flight, fastened those claws
In his fist till they cracked.”

22. "...When the sun returned, the Danes'
Great king poured out treasure, repaid me
In hammered gold for the bloody battle
I'd fought in his name."
23. (In the mead hall they)
"Stood waiting for time to pass, for war
To begin, for flames to leap as high
As the few that would light them. And then
As now warriors sang of their pleasure."
24. "We must go to him, while angry
Flames burn at his flesh, help
Out our glorious king!"
25. (The challenge between Beowulf and his friend, Brecca, when they swam in the sea for five days and nights with their swords and in full armor.)
"...But the truth
Is simple: no man swims in the sea
As I can, no strength is a match for mine."

Read the following passages from *Beowulf* and answer the questions that follow.

26. The following quote refers to Beowulf.
"...Our own hope
Again, lies with you. Grendel's mother
Is hidden in her terrible home, in a place
You've not seen under a lake. Seek it,
if you dare!"

The epic hero quality BEST reflected in the above passage is:

- A. physical strength
 - B. reluctance to make a commitment
 - C. boasting of accomplishments
 - D. descent to a lower region
27. Before his battle with the dragon, Beowulf utters his final boast.
"I've never known fear; as a youth I fought
In endless battles. I am old now
But I will fight again, seek fame still,
If the dragon hiding in his tower dares
To face me."

In the above lines Beowulf expresses his:

- A. concern for his loyal servants
- B. loyalty to his gods
- C. desire for glory
- D. regret about his lost warriors

Refer to the passage below for the next questions:

“Thus boiled with care the breast of Hrothgar; 1
Ceaselessly sorrowed the son of Healfdane,
None of his chieftains might change his lot,
Too fell was the foe that afflicted the people
With wrongs unnumbered, and nightly horrors. 5
Then heard in his home King Hyglac’s thane,
The dauntless Jute, of the doing of Grendel,
In strength he outstripped the strongest of men
That swell in the earth in the days of his life.
Gallant and bold, he gave command 10
To get him a board, a good wave-skimmer,
O’er the swan-road, he said, he would seek the king
Noble and famous, who needed men.” 13

28. In line 2 from above, the underlined sounds indicate a/an:

- A. alliteration.
- B. simile.
- C. kenning.
- D. metaphor.

29. The underlined words in line 11 from above indicate a/an:

- A. alliteration.
- B. simile.
- C. caesura.
- D. kenning.

30. It is obvious in line 11 that a “wave-skimmer” is a/an:

- A. bridge.
- B. ocean wave.
- C. boat.
- D. surf board.

31. What does the following quotation suggest as an alternative motive for the story of *Beowulf*?

“Hail/ To those who will rise to God, drop off/ Their dead bodies and seek our Father’s peace!”

- A. It warns against the possible damnation of the soul.
- B. It recasts the purpose of the poem to convert pagans to Christians
- C. It depicts how the Anglo-Saxons struggled with the concept of death.
- D. It creates a sense of fear towards masculine figures.

32. When Beowulf decides to travel to the land of the Danes to help Hrothgar, the narrator states, “None/ Of the wise ones regretted his going, much/ As he was loved by the Geats: the omens were good,/ And they urged the adventure on.”

Why would the wise ones not regret Beowulf’s departure if they love him so much?

- A. They distrust the omens and want Beowulf to prove them wrong.
- B. They have great pride in their warrior and want him to make their people famous worldwide.
- C. They trust the omens and Beowulf to guide them along the path of Fate.
- D. Both B and C.

33. When Beowulf first speaks with Hrothgar, he says, “I have come so far,/ O shelterer of warriors and your people’s loved friend,/ That this one favor you should not refuse me [...]”. What device is Beowulf using in this quote and why is he using it?
- A. Beowulf is using alliteration in order to emphasize why he has come.
 - B. Beowulf is using flattering epithets in order to convince the king to allow him to kill Grendel.
 - C. Beowulf is using personification to emphasize the humanity of Hrothgar as a leader.
 - D. Beowulf is using an apostrophe to show he is desperate for glory.
34. Before King Beowulf goes to fight the dragon, he says: “No abide by the barrow, ye breastplate-mailed,/ ye heroes in harness, which of us twain/ better from battle-rush bear his wounds./ Wait ye the finish. The fight is not yours,/ nor meet for any but me alone/ to measure might with this monster here/ and play the hero.” What does this quote reveal about Beowulf as a character?
- A. That he is prideful and wants the glory for himself.
 - B. That he is selfish because he wants the dragon’s treasure all for himself.
 - C. That he wants help from his fellow warriors to fight the dragon.
 - D. That he believes he can defeat the dragon easily.

Match the character to the epithet it describes him, her, or it.

- A. Beowulf**
 - B. Hrothgar**
 - C. Dragon**
 - D. Grendel**
 - E. Grendel’s Mother**
- AB. Welthow (mark both A and B together)**

- 35. “That shepherd of evil, guardian of crime”
- 36. “Higlac’s follower and the strongest of the Geats”
- 37. “The hoard-guard”
- 38. “Hrothgar’s gold-ringed queen”
- 39. “wolf-of-the-deep, mere-wife monstrous”
- 40. “Danes’ great king”