

“The Wanderer” Translated by Charles W. Kennedy *Directions: Fill in all thirteen boxes with your paraphrasing of the text to the box’s left.*

Old English	Your Paraphrasing	Smith’s notes to you
<p>Oft to the wanderer, weary of exile, Cometh God's pity, <u>compassionate</u> love, Though woefully toiling on wintry seas With churning oar in the icy wave. 5 Homeless and helpless he fled from fate.</p>		<p>Oft = often Toil = exhausting labor or effort</p> <p>Saith = says; the “th” can usually just be replaced with the present tense ending of the verb the “th” is attached to</p>
<p>Thus saith the wanderer mindful of misery, <u>Grievous</u> disasters, and death of kin:</p>		<p>Grievous=Causing sorrow; hard to bear</p>
<p>"Oft when the day broke, oft at the dawning, Lonely and wretched I wailed my woe. 10 No man is living, no comrade left. To whom I dare fully unlock my heart. I have learned truly the mark of a man Is keeping his counsel and locking his lips, Let him think what he will! For, woe of heart 15 Withstandeth not fate: a failing spirit Earneth no help. Men eager for honor Bury their sorrow deep in the breast.</p>		<p>Notice how the line starts with a quotation mark—this indicates that the “wanderer” has begun speaking. The speaking does not end until line 102. Each new stanza after this will begin with a quote mark to remind you that he is still speaking, but there will be no quote mark at the end of the stanza (because he is still speaking).</p> <p>“keep his counsel” this is a common phrase that means a man keeps his own thoughts to himself.</p>
<p>"So have I also, often in wretchedness Fettered my feelings, far from my kin, 20 Homeless and <u>hapless</u>, since days of old, When the dark earth covered my dear lord's face, And I sailed away with sorrowful heart, Over wintry seas, seeking a gold-lord,* If far or near lived one to befriend me 25 With gift in the mead-hall and comfort for grief.</p>		<p>hapless = Unlucky</p> <p>* Lords rewarded their warriors with gifts of gold, and also built them a “mead hall” which was a place where men could gather, tell stories, drink, and share camaraderie.</p>
<p>"Who bears it, knows what a bitter companion, Shoulder to shoulder, sorrow can be, When friends are no more.</p>		
<p>(part of the last) His fortune is exile, Not gifts of fine gold; a heart that is frozen, 30 Earth's <u>winsomeness</u> dead. And he dreams of the hall-men The dealing of treasure, the days of his youth, When his lord bade welcome to <u>wassail</u> and feast. But gone is that gladness, and never again Shall come the loved counsel of comrade and king</p>		<p>winsomeness = Pleasantness; delightfulness.</p> <p>wassail = A toast in drinking a person's health, or a celebration at which such toasts are made.</p>

<p>35 "Even in slumber his sorrow assaileth, And, dreaming he claspeth his dear lord again, Head on knee, hand on knee, loyally laying, Pledging his <u>lieges</u> as in days long past. Then from his slumber <u>he starts</u> lonely-hearted,</p> <p>40 Beholding gray stretches of tossing sea. Sea-birds bathing, with wings outspread, While hailstorms darken, and driving snow. Bitterer then is the <u>bane</u> of his wretchedness, The longing for loved one: his grief is renewed.</p> <p>45 The forms of his kinsmen take shape in the silence: In <u>rapture</u> he greets them; in gladness he scans Old comrades remembered. But they melt into air With no word of greeting to gladden his heart. Then again surges his sorrow upon him:</p>		<p>liege (lej): Loyalty. "he starts" = he wakes up bane = <u>A cause</u> of harm, ruin, or death rapture (rap cher) n: Expression of joy or pleasure</p>
<p>50 And grimly he <u>spurs</u> his weary soul Once more to the toil of the tossing sea. "No wonder therefore, in all the world, If a shadow darkens upon my spirit When I reflect on the fates of men</p> <p>55 How one by one proud warriors vanish From the halls that knew them, and day by day All this earth ages and droops unto death.</p>		<p>Spurs = urges</p>
<p>No man may know wisdom till many a winter Has been his portion. A wise man is patient, 60 Not swift to anger, nor hasty of speech, Neither too weak, nor too reckless, in war, Neither fearful nor <u>fain</u>, nor too wishful of wealth, Nor too eager in vow- <u>ere</u> he know the event. A brave man must <u>bide</u> when he speaketh his boast</p> <p>65 Until he know surely the goal of his spirit.</p>		<p>fain (fan): Archaic word meaning "eager"; In this context it means "too eager." Ere = before bide (bid); Wait.</p>
<p>"A wise man will ponder how dread is that doom When all this world's wealth shall be scattered and waste As now, over all, through the regions of earth, Walls stand <u>rime</u>-covered and swept by the winds.</p> <p>70 The battlements crumble, the wine-halls decay; Joyless and silent the heroes are sleeping Where the proud host fell by the wall they defended. Some battle launched on their long, last journey; One a bird bore o'er the billowing sea:</p>		<p>rime (rim)-covered: Covered with frost. Revel = boisterous merrymaking or festivity; partying</p>

<p>75 One the gray wolf slew; one a grieving earl Sadly gave to the grave's embrace. The Warden of men hath wasted this world Till the sound of music and revel is stilled, And these giant-built structures stand empty of life.</p>		
<p>80 "He who shall muse on these moldering ruins, And deeply ponder this darkling life, Must brood on old legends of battle and bloodshed, And heavy the mood that troubles his heart: Where now is the warrior? Where is the war horse? 85 Bestowal of treasure, and sharing of feast? Alas! the bright ale-cup, the <u>byrny</u>-clad warrior, The prince in his splendor- those days are long sped In the night of the past, as if they never had been! And now remains only, for warriors' memorial. 90 A wall wondrous high with serpent shapes carved. Storms of <u>ash-spears</u> have <u>smitten</u> the earls, Carnage of weapon, and conquering fate.</p>		<p>byrny (ba[r ne]-clad: Dressed in a coat of chain-mail armor ash-spears= spears made of ash wood smitten = struck, as with a hard blow</p> <p>The "ubi sunt" motif (literally "Where they are.") is a phrase taken from the Latin Ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt?, meaning "Where are those who were before us?" Ubi sunt is a phrase that begins several Latin medieval poems. It refers to the tone of the poem. Sometimes considered to be a nostalgic longing for the clichéd "good old days", the ubi sunt motif is actually a meditation on mortality and life's transience.</p>
<p>"Storms now batter these ramparts of stone; Blowing snow and the blast of winter 95 Enfold the earth; night-shadows fall Darkly lowering, from the north driving Raging hail in wrath upon men. Wretchedness fills the realm of earth, And fate's decrees transform the world. 100 Here wealth is fleeting, friends are fleeting, Man is fleeting, maid is fleeting; All the foundation of earth shall fail!"</p>		
<p>Thus spake the sage in solitude pondering. Good man is he who guardeth his faith. 105 He must never too quickly unburden his breast Of its sorrow, but eagerly strive for <u>redress</u>; And happy the man who seeketh for mercy From his heavenly Father, our fortress and strength.</p>		<p>redress (ri dress) n: Compensation, as for a wrong</p>

Questions for “The Wanderer”

1. Explain why the wanderer grieves. Provide at least two pieces of text from the poem and explain how the text supports your point.
2. Find at least 2 kennings for death.
3. An image is a word or phrase in a literary text that appeals directly to the reader's taste, touch, hearing, sight, or smell. An image is thus any vivid or picturesque phrase that evokes a particular sensation in the reader's mind. Copy down a couple of lines from the poem that create an image for the reader. A. Explain what the image is, and B. Explain how the image conveys or relates to the overall sense or message of the poem.
4. Explain how the “ubi sunt” motif (a reoccurring theme or idea) relates to “The Wanderer.” Provide textual support.
5. Copy down at least 3 examples of alliteration.
6. Ultimately, what is the message of this poem?