Packet to Accompany

the study of

John Donne
and
John Milton
Song

Sweetest love, I do not go,
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me:
But since that I
Must die at last, tis best,
To use myself in jest,
Thus by feigned deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here today;
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way;
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man’s power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour
Nor a lost hour recall!
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And teach it art and length,
Itself o’er us to advance.

When thou sigh’st, thou sigh’st not wind,
But sigh’st my soul away;
When thou weep’st, unkindly kind,
My life’s blood doth decay.
It cannot be
That thou lovest me as thou say’st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
That art the best of me.
Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill,
Destiny may take thy part,
And may thy fears fulfill;
But think that we
Are but turned aside to sleep.
They who one another keep
Alive, ne’r parted be.

Questions:

1. Of what is the speaker trying to convince his love?
   Answer: That he has no choice but to leave her.
   Example:

2. In each stanza, what justification does the poet offer for his leaving?

   • First stanza:
     Answer: It’s not because I don’t love you, but someday I’ll die anyway.
     Example:

   • Second stanza:
     Answer: I’ll come back, just like the sun that disappears at night but rises again in the morning. Besides, the sun doesn’t have a reason to return like I do.
     Example:

   • Third Stanza:
     Answer: It’s bad luck; I can’t help it!
     Example:

   • Fourth Stanza:
     Answer: You can’t possibly love me as much as you say you do.
     Example:

   • Fifth Stanza:
Answer: As long as we are living, we’ll be together.
Example:

3. Does the poet care about his lady? (No need for a quote but give your reason)
Answer: No – if he really loved her, he wouldn’t come up with so many ridiculous reasons he “has” to leave her. Yes – he’s trying to convince himself it’s the right thing to do.
Reason:

Holy Sonnet 10

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul’s delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well
Or better than thy stroke; why swell’st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Question:

1. What are the seven reasons the speaker gives to prove that death is not great?
   First:
   Answer: Those it lords over don’t really die, and he can’t be killed either.
   Example:
Second
**Answer:** Death is like rest or sleep. These are peaceful and pleasant, so death must be also.
**Example:**

Third
**Answer:** Death brings rest and delivery of the soul; the best men die.
**Example:**

Fourth
**Answer:** Death has no power of its own. It's dealt out by destiny, chance, kings or desperate men (suicide)
**Example:**

Fifth
**Answer:** Death keeps company with unpleasant things like poison, war and sickness.
**Example:**

Sixth
**Answer:** Magic can make us sleep just as well if not better than death.
**Example:**

Seventh
**Answer:** Death is brief; it leads to eternal life. Therefore, it has no real power.
**Example:**
Holy Sonnet #14

Batter my heart, three-personed God; for You
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o’erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labor to admit You, but O, to no end,
Reason Your viceroy (governor in your stead) in me, should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love You, and would be loved fain,
But am betrothed (humanity’s relationship with God has been described in terms of marriage and adultery from the time of Hebrew prophets) unto Your enemy.
Divorce me, untie, or break the knot again;
Take me to You, imprison me, for I,
Except (unless) You enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except You ravish me.

Questions:

1. What does the speaker want God to do?
   Answer: tear me down to build me up
   Example:

2. How has God treated him up to that point?
   Answer:
   Example:

3. Who is God’s viceroy?
   Answer: viceroy = representative of a sovereign. Reason.
   Example:

4. What are the two paradoxes that end the poem?

   First: unless you imprison me, I cannot be free.
   Example: Take me to You, imprison me, for I / except You enthrall me, never shall be free
Second: Unless you ravish (rape) me, I cannot be chaste.
Example: Nor chaste, except You ravish me.
Opening two sentences (lines 1 – 26) of “Paradise Lost”

Opening statement combines epic statement of theme and invocation of the muse.
Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit (Eve’s apple, also all the consequences of eating it)
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal* (deadly) taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man* (Christ – the second Adam)
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,

Sing Heavenly Muse* (in Greek mythology, Urania, Muse of Astronomy – here identified with the Muse who inspired Moses to write Genesis and the Pentateuch, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai*, didst inspire
That shepherd (Moses), who first taught the chosen seed (the Pentateuch – first five books of the bible – for instruction of the Jews),
In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion hill* (Mount Zion – site of Solomon’s Temple)

Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook* (spring near the temple where Christ cured a blind man) that flowed
Fast* by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,

Above the Aonian mount* (Helicon, home of the classical Muses – Milton is saying he will surpass Homer and Virgil), while it pursues

Things unattempted (take pride in originality) yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou O Spirit* (impulse, voice or power of God), that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know’st; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread

Dovelike sat’st brooding on the vast abyss
And mad’st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument* (subject/theme)
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify (show the justice of) the ways of God to men.
Questions:

1. The first five lines of *Paradise Lost* allude to the biblical story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise. What are five elements of the story that Milton chose to emphasize?

   Element One
   Answer: man’s first disobedience
   Example:

   Element two
   Answer: fruit from the forbidden tree
   Example:

   Element Three
   Answer: original sin
   Example:

   Element Four
2. Lines 6 to 26 are the invocation to the muse. What is Milton asking the Muse for?
Answer: aid, instruction, illumination
Example:
I thence invoke thy aid to my advent’rous song
Instruct me, for though know’st; thou from the first / Wast present
What in my is dark / illumine, what is low raise and support