Week 6 Literary Reflections:

Life as Nostos: Mission, Calling, and Vocation

In this segment we shall consider how our individual lives reflect a sense of calling and mission such that we are, like Odysseus, ultimately on a journey home. Baylor's mission, which we shall discuss in this class, is now a part of our own, and how these two connect will be not simply the subject of this class but of the next four years.

Act Two Scene One

Scene: The same. It is around quarter to one. No sunlight comes into the room now through the windows at right. Outside the day is still fine but increasingly sultry, with a faint haziness in the air which softens the glare of the sun.

Edmund sits in the armchair at left of table, reading a book. Or rather he is trying to concentrate on it but cannot. He seems to be listening for some sound from upstairs. His manner is nervously apprehensive and he looks more sickly than in the previous act.

The second girl, CATHLEEN, enters from the back parlor. She carries a tray on which is a bottle of bonded Bourbon, several whiskey glasses, and a pitcher of ice water. She is a buxom Irish peasant, in her early twenties, with a red-cheeked comely face, black hair and blue eyes- amiable, ignorant, clumsy, and possessed by a dense, well-meaning stupidity. She puts the tray on the table. Edmund pretends to be so absorbed in his book he does not notice her, but she ignores this.

CATHLEEN

With garrulous familiarity

Here’s the whiskey. It’ll be lunch time soon. Will I call your father and Mister Jamie, or will you?

EDMUND

Without looking up from his book.

You do it.
CATHLEEN

It’s a wonder your father wouldn’t look at his watch once in a while. He’s a devil for making the meals late, and then Bridget curses me as if I was to blame. But he’s a grand handsome man, if he is old. You’ll never see the day you’re as good looking – nor Mister Jamie, either.

She chuckles

I’ll wager Mister Jamie wouldn’t miss the time to stop work and have his drop of whiskey if he had a watch to his name!

EDMUND

Gives up trying to ignore her and grins.

You win that one.

CATHLEEN

And here’s another I’d win, that you're making me call them so you can sneak a drink before they come.

EDMUND

Well, I hadn’t thought of that -

CATHLEEN

Oh no, not you! Butter wouldn’t melt in your mouth I suppose.

EDMUND

But now you suggest it-
CATHLEEN

Suddenly primly virtuous.

I’d never suggest a man or a woman touch drink, Mister Edmund. Sure, didn’t it kill an uncle of mine in the old country?

Relenting

Still, a drop now and then is no harm when you’re in low spirits, or have a bad cold.

EDMUND

Thanks for handing me a good excuse.

Then with forced casualness.

You’d better call my mother, too.

CATHLEEN

What for? She’s always on time without any calling. God bless her, she has some consideration for the help.

EDMUND

She’s been taking a nap.

CATHLEEN

She wasn’t asleep when I finished my work upstairs a while back. She was lying down in the spare room with her eyes wide open. She’d a terrible headache, she said.

EDMUND

His casualness more forced
Oh well then, just call my father.

**CATHLEEN**

*Goes to the screen door, grumbling good-naturedly*

No wonder my feet kill me each night. I won’t walk out in this heat and get sunstroke. I’ll call from the porch.

*She goes out on the side porch, letting the screen door slam behind her, and disappears on her way to the front porch. A moment later she is heard shouting.*

Mister Tyrone! Mister Jamie! It’s time!

*Edmund, who has been staring frightfully before him, forgetting his book, springs to his feet nervously.*

**EDMUND**

God, what a wench!

*He grabs the bottle and pours a drink, adds ice water and drinks. As he does so, he hears someone coming in the front door. He puts the glass hastily on the tray and sits down again, opening his book. Jamie comes in from the front parlor, his coat over his arm. He has taken off collar and tie and carries them in his hand. He is wiping sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief. Edmund looks up as if his reading was interrupted. Jamie takes one look at the bottle and glasses and smiles cynically.*

**JAMIE**

Sneaking one, eh? Cut out the bluff, Kid. You’re a rottener actor than I am.

**EDMUND**

*Grins*

Yes, I grabbed one while the going was good.
JAMIE

Puts a hand affectionately on his shoulder

That's better. Why kid me? We're pals aren't we?

EDMUND

I wasn't sure you were coming.

JAMIE

I made the Old Man look at his watch. I was halfway up the walk when Cathleen burst into song. Our wild Irish lark! She ought to be a train announcer.

EDMUND

That's what drove me to drink. Why don't you sneak one while you've got a chance?

JAMIE

I was thinking of that little thing.

He goes quickly to the window at right.

The Old Man was talking to old Captain Turner. Yes, he's still at it.

He comes back and takes a drink.

And now, to cover up from his eagle eye, he memorizes the level in the bottle after every drink.

He measures two drinks of water and pours them in the whiskey bottle and shakes it up.
There. That fixes it.

*He pours water in the glass and sets it on the table by Edmund.*

And here’s the water you’ve been drinking.

**EDMUND**

Fine! You don’t think it will fool him, do you?

**JAMIE**

Maybe not, but he can’t prove it.

*Putting on his collar and tie.*

I hope he doesn’t forget lunch listening to himself talk. I’m hungry.

*He sits across the table from Edmund – irritably.*

That’s what I hate about working down in front. He puts on an act for every damned fool that comes along.

**EDMUND**

*Gloomily*

You’re in luck to be hungry. The way I feel I don’t care if I ever eat again.

**JAMIE**

*Gives him a glance of concern*

Listen, Kid. You know me. I’ve never lectured you, but Doctor Hardy was right when he told you to cut out the redeye.
EDMUND

Oh, I'm going to after he hands me the bad news this afternoon. A few before then won't make any difference.

JAMIE

_Hesitates – then slowly._

I'm glad you've got your mind prepared for bad news. It won't be such a jolt.

_He catches Edmund staring at him._

I mean, it's a cinch you're really sick, and it would be wrong dope to kid yourself.

EDMUND

_Disturbed_

I'm not. I know how rotten I feel, and the fever and chills I get at night are no joke. I think Doctor Hardy's last guess was right. It must be the damned malaria come back on me.

JAMIE

Maybe, but don't be too sure.

EDMUND

Why? What do you think it is?

JAMIE

Hell, how would I know? I'm no Doc.
Abruptly
Where's Mama?

EDMUND
Upstairs.

JAMIE
Looks at him sharply.

When did she go up?

EDMUND
Oh, about the time I came down to the hedge, I guess. She said she was going to take a nap.

JAMIE
You didn't tell me –

EDMUND
Defensively
Why should I? What about it? She was tired out. She didn't get much sleep last night.

JAMIE
I know she didn't.

A pause. The brothers avoid looking at each other.
EDMUND

That damned foghorn kept me awake, too.

Another Pause.

JAMIE

She's been upstairs alone all morning, eh? You haven't seen her?

EDMUND

No. I've been reading here. I wanted to give her a chance to sleep.

JAMIE

Is she coming down to lunch?

EDMUND

Of course.

JAMIE

Dryly.

No of course about it. She might not want any lunch. Or she might start having most of her meals alone upstairs. That's happened, hasn't it?

EDMUND

With frightened resentment.

Cut it out! Can't you think anything but --?


*Persuasively*

You’re all wrong to suspect anything. Cathleen saw her not long ago. Mama didn’t tell her she wouldn’t be down to lunch.

**JAMIE**

Then she wasn’t taking a nap?

**EDMUND**

Not right then, but she was lying down, Cathleen said.

**JAMIE**

In the spare room?

**EDMUND**

Yes. For Pete’s sake, what of it?

**JAMIE**

*Bursts out.*

You damned fool! Why did you leave her alone so long? Why didn’t you stick around?

**EDMUND**

Because she accused me – and you and Papa – of spying on her all the time and not trusting her. She made me feel ashamed. I know how rotten it must be for her. And she promised on her sacred word of honor –

**JAMIE**
With a bitter weariness.

You ought to know that doesn't mean anything.

EDMUND

It does this time!

JAMIE

That's what we thought the other times.

He leans over the table to give his brother's arm an affectionate grasp.

Listen, Kid, I know you think I'm a cynical bastard, but remember I've seen a lot more of this game than you have. You never knew what was really wrong until you were in prep school. Papa and I kept it from you. But I was wise ten years or more before we had to tell you. I know the game backwards and I've been thinking all morning of the way she acted last night when she thought we were asleep. I haven't been able to think of anything else. And now you tell me she got you to leave her alone upstairs all morning.

EDMUND

She didn't! You're crazy!

JAMIE

Placotingly

All right, Kid. Don't start a battle with me. I hope as much as you do I'm crazy. I've been as happy as hell because I'd really begun to believe that this time –

He stops – looking through the front parlor toward the hall – lowering his voice, hurriedly.

She's coming downstairs. You win on that. I guess I'm a damned suspicious louse.
They grow tense with a hopeful, fearful expectancy. Jamie mutters.

Damn! I wish I'd grabbed another drink.

**EDMUND**

Me, too.

He coughs nervously and this brings on a real fit of coughing. Jamie glances at him with worried pity. Mary enters from the front parlor. At first one notices no change except that she appears to be less nervous, to be more as she was when we first saw her after breakfast, but then one becomes aware that her eyes are brighter and there is a peculiar detachment in her voice and manner, as if she were a little withdrawn from her words and actions.

**MARY**

Goes worriedly to Edmund and puts her arm around him.

You mustn’t cough like that. It’s bad for your throat. You don’t want to get a sore throat on top of your cold.

She kisses him. He stops coughing and gives her a quick apprehensive glance, but if his suspicions are aroused her tenderness makes him renounce them and he believes what he wants to believe for the moment. On the other hand, Jamie knows after one probing look at her that his suspicions are justified. His eyes fall to stare at the floor, his face sets in an half sitting on the arm of Edmund’s chair, her arm around him, so her face is above and behind his and he cannot look into her eyes.

But I seem to be always picking on you, telling you don’t do this and don’t do that. Forgive me, dear. It’s just that I want to take care of you.

**EDMUND**

I know, Mama. How about you? Do you feel rested?
MARY

Yes, ever so much better. I’ve been lying down ever since you went out. It’s what I needed after such a restless night. I don’t feel nervous now.

EDMUND

That’s fine.

He pats her hand on his shoulder. Jamie gives him a strange almost contemptuous glance, wondering if his brother can really mean this. Edmund does not notice but his mother does.

MARY

In a forced teasing tone.

Good heavens, how down in the mouth you look, Jamie. What’s the matter now?

JAMIE

Without looking at her.

Nothing.

MARY

Oh I’d forgotten you’ve been working on the front hedge. That accounts for your sinking into the dumps doesn’t it?

JAMIE

If you want to think so, Mama.

MARY

Keeping her tone.
Well, that’s the effect it always has, isn’t it? What a big baby you are! Isn’t he, Edmund?

EDMUND

He’s certainly a fool to care what anyone thinks.

MARY

Strangely.

Yes, the only way is to make yourself not care.

She catches Jamie giving her a bitter glance and changes the subject.

Where is your father? I heard Cathleen call him.

EDMUND

Gabbing with old Captain Turner, Jamie says. He’ll be late, as usual.

Jamie gets up and goes to the windows at right, glad of an excuse to turn his back.

MARY

I’ve told Cathleen time and again she must go wherever he is and tell him. The idea of screaming as if this were a cheap boardinghouse!

JAMIE

Looking out the window.

She’s down there now.
Sneeringly

Interrupting the famous Beautiful Voice! She should have more respect.

MARY

Sharply-letting her resentment toward him come out.

It’s you who should have more respect! Stop sneering at your father! I won’t have it! You ought to be proud you’re his son! He may have his faults. Who hasn’t? But he’s worked hard all his life. He made his way up from ignorance and poverty to the top of his profession. Everyone else admires him and you should be the last one to sneer – you, who, thanks to him, have never had to work hard in your life!

Stung, Jamie has turned to stare at her with accusing antagonism. Her eyes waver guiltily and she adds in a tone which begins to placate.

Remember your father is getting old, Jamie. You really ought to show more consideration.

JAMIE

I ought to?

EDMUND

Uneasily.

Oh, dry up, Jamie!

Jamie looks out the window again.

And, for Pete’s sake, Mama, why jump on Jamie all of a sudden?

MARY
Bitterly.

Because he's always sneering at someone else, always looking for the worst weakness in everyone.

Then with a strange, abrupt change to a detached, impersonal tone.

But I suppose life has made him like that, and he can't help it. None of us can help the things life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be, and you've lost your true self forever.

Edmund is made apprehensive by her strangeness. He tries to look up in her eyes but she keeps them averted. Jamie turns to her – then looks quickly out of the window again.

JAMIE

Dully.

I'm hungry. I wish the Old Man would get a move on. It's a rotten trick the way he keeps meals waiting, and then beefs because they're spoiled.

MARY

With a resentment that has a quality of being automatic and on the surface while inwardly she is indifferent.

Yes, it's very trying, Jamie. You don't know how trying. You don't have to keep house with summer servants who don't care because they know it isn't a permanent position. The really good servants are all with people who have homes and not merely summer places. And your father won't even pay the wages the best summer help ask. So every year I have stupid, lazy greenhorns to deal with. But you've heard me say this a thousand times. So has he, but it goes in one ear and out the other. He thinks money spent on a home is money wasted. He's lived too much in hotels. Never the best hotels, of course. Second-rate hotels. He doesn't understand a home. He doesn't feel at home in it. And yet, he wants a home. He's even proud of having this shabby place. He
loves it here.

*She laughs a hopeless and yet amused laugh.*

It's really funny, when you come to think of it. He's a peculiar man.

**EDMUND**

*Again attempting uneasily to look up in her eyes.*

What makes you ramble on like that, Mama?

**MARY**

*Quickly casual, patting his cheek.*

Why, nothing in particular, dear. It *is* foolish.

*As she speaks, Cathleen enters from the back parlor.*

**CATHLEEN**

*Volubly.*

Lunch is ready, Ma’am, I went down to Mister Tyrone, like you ordered, and he said he’d come right away but he kept on talking to that man, telling him of the time when –

**MARY**

*Indifferently.*

All right, Cathleen. Tell Bridget I’m sorry but she’ll have to wait a few minutes until Mister Tyrone is here.

*Cathleen mutters, “Yes, Ma’am,” and goes off through the back parlor, grumbling to herself.*
JAMIE

Damn it! Why don’t you go ahead without him? He’s told us to.

MARY

*With a remote, amused smile.*

He doesn’t mean it. Don’t you know your father yet? He’d be so terribly hurt.

EDMUND

*Jumps up – as if he was glad of an excuse to leave.*

I’ll make him get a move on.

*He goes out on the side porch. A moment later he is heard calling from the porch exasperatedly*

Hey! Papa! Come on! We can’t wait all day!

*Mary has risen from the arm of the chair. Her hands play restlessly over the table top. She does not look at Jamie but she feels the cynically appraising glance he gives her face and hands.*

MARY

*Tensely*

Why do you stare like that?

JAMIE

You know.
He turns back to the window.

MARY

I don’t know.

JAMIE

Oh, for God’s sake, do you think you can fool me, Mama? I’m not blind.

MARY

Looks directly at him now, her face set again in an expression of blank, stubborn denial.

I don’t know what you’re talking about.

JAMIE

No? Take a look at your eyes in the mirror!

EDMUND

Coming in from the porch

I got Papa moving. He’ll be here in a minute.

With a glance from one to the other, which his mother avoids – uneasily.

What’s happened? What’s the matter, Mama?

MARY

Disturbed by his coming, gives way to a flurry of guilty, nervous excitement.

Your brother ought to be ashamed of himself. He’s been insinuating I don’t know what.
EDMUND

*Turns on Jamie.*

God damn you!

*He takes a threatening step toward him. Jamie turns his back with a shrug and looks out the window.*

MARY

*More upset, grabs Edmund’s arm – excitedly.*

Stop this at once, do you hear me? How dare you use such language before me!

*Abruptly her tone and manner change to the strange detachment she has shown before.*

It’s wrong to blame your brother. He can’t help being what the past has made him. Any more than your father can. Or you. Or I.

EDMUND

*Frightenedly – with a desperate hoping against hope.*

He’s a liar! It’s a lie, isn’t it, Mama?

MARY

*Keeping her eyes averted.*

What is a lie? Now you’re talking in riddles like Jamie.

*Then her eyes meet his stricken, accusing look. She stammers.*

Edmund! Don’t!
She looks away and her manner instantly regains the quality of strange detachment—calmly.

There's your father coming up the steps now. I must tell Bridget.

She goes through the back parlor. Edmund moves slowly to his chair. He looks sick and hopeless.

JAMIE

From the window, without looking around.

Well?

EDMUND

Refusing to admit anything to his brother yet—weakly defiant.

Well, what? You're a liar.

Jamie again shrugs his shoulders. The screen door on the front porch is heard closing. Edmund says dully.

Here's Papa. I hope he loosens up with the old bottle.

Tyrone comes in through the front parlor. He is putting on his coat.

TYRONE

Sorry I'm late. Captain Turner stopped to talk and once he starts gabbing you can't get away from him.

JAMIE

Without turning—dryly.
You mean once he starts listening.

_His father regards him with dislike. He comes to the table with a quick measuring look at the bottle of whiskey. Without turning, Jamie senses this._

It's all right. The level in the bottle hasn't changed.

**TYRONE**

I wasn't noticing that.

_He adds caustically._

As if it proved anything with you around. I'm on to your tricks.

**EDMUND**

_Dully._

Did I hear you say, let's all have a drink?

**TYRONE**

_Frowns at him._

Jamie is welcome after his hard day's work, but I won't invite you. Doctor Hardy –

**EDMUND**

To hell with Doctor Hardy! One isn't going to kill me. I feel – all in, Papa.

**TYRONE**

_With a worried look at him – putting on a fake heartiness._

Come along, then. It's before a meal and I've always found that good whiskey, taken
in moderation as an appetizer, is the best of tonics.

_Edmund gets up as his father passes the bottle to him. He pours a big drink. Tyrone frowns admonishingly._

I said, in moderation.

_He pours his own drink and passes the bottle to Jamie, grumbling._

It’d be a waste of breath mentioning moderation to you.

Ignoring the hint, Jamie pours a big drink. His father scowls – then giving it up, resumes his hearty air, raising his glass.

Well, here’s health and happiness!

_Edmund gives a bitter laugh._

**EDMUND**

That’s a joke!

**TYRONE**

What is?

**EDMUND**

Nothing. Here’s how.

_They drink._

**TYRONE**

_Becoming aware of the atmosphere._
What’s the matter here? There’s the gloom in the air you could cut with a knife.

*Turns on Jamie resentfully.*

You got the drink you were after, didn’t you? Why are you wearing that gloomy look on your mug?

**JAMIE**

*Shrugging his shoulders.*

You won’t be singing a song yourself soon.

**EDMUND**

Shut up, Jamie.

**TYRONE**

*Uneasy now – changing the subject.*

I thought lunch was ready. I’m hungry as a hunter. Where is your mother?

**MARY**

*Returning through the back parlor, calls.*

Here I am.

*She comes in. She is excited and self-conscious. As she talks, she glances everywhere except at any of their faces.*

I’ve had to calm down Bridget. She’s in a tantrum over your being late again, and I don’t blame her. If your lunch is dried up from waiting in the oven she said it served you right, you could like it or leave it for all she cared.
With increasing excitement.

Oh, I’m so sick and tired of pretending this is a home! You won’t help me! You won’t put yourself out the least bit! You don’t know how to act in a home! You don’t really want one! You never have wanted one – never since the day we were married! You should have remained a bachelor and lived in second-rate hotels and entertained your friends in barrooms!

She adds strangely, as if she were now talking aloud to herself rather than to Tyrone.

Then nothing would ever have happened.

They stare at her. Tyrone knows now. He suddenly looks a tired, bitterly sad old man. Edmund glances at his father and sees that he knows, but he still cannot help trying to warn his mother.

EDMUND

Mama! Stop talking. Why don’t we go in to lunch.

MARY

Starts and at once the quality of unnatural detachment settles on her face again. She even smiles with an ironical amusement to herself.

Yes, it is inconsiderate of me to dig up the past, when I know your father and Jamie must be hungry.

Putting her arm around Edmund’s shoulder – with a fond solicitude which is at the same time remote.

I do hope you have an appetite, dear. You really must eat more.

Her eyes become fixed on the whiskey glass on the table beside him – sharply.
Why is that glass there? Did you take a drink? Oh, how can you be such a fool? Don't you know it's the worst thing?

She turns on Tyrone.

You're to blame, James. How could you let him? Do you want to kill him? Don't you remember my father? He wouldn't stop after he was stricken. He said doctors were fools! He thought, like you, that whiskey is a good tonic!

A look of terror comes into her eyes and she stammers.

But, of course, there's no comparison at all. I don't know why I – Forgive me for scolding you, James. One small drink won't hurt Edmund. It might be good for him, if it gives him an appetite.

She pats Edmund’s cheek playfully, the strange detachment again in her manner. He jerks his head away. She seems not to notice, but she moves instinctively away.

JAMIE

Roughly, to hide his tense nerves.

For God's sake, let's eat. I've been working in the damned dirt under the hedge all morning. I've earned my grub.

He comes around in back of his father, not looking at his mother, and grabs Edmund's shoulder.

Come on, Kid. Let's put on the feed bag.

Edmund gets up, keeping his eyes averted from his mother. They pass her, heading for the back parlor.

TYRONE

Dully
Yes, you go in with your mother, lads. I’ll join you in a second.

But they keep on without waiting for her. She looks at their backs with a helpless hurt and, as they enter the back parlor, starts to follow them. Tyrone’s eyes are on her, sad and condemning. She feels them and turns sharply without meeting his stare.

MARY

Why do you look at me like that?

Her hands flutter up to pat her hair.

Is it my hair coming down? I was so worn out from last night. I thought I better lie down this morning. I drowsed off and had a nice refreshing nap. But I’m sure I fixed my hair again when I woke up.

Forcing a laugh

Although, as usual, I couldn’t find my glasses.

Sharply.

Please stop staring! One would think you were accusing me –

Then pleadingly

James! You don’t understand!

TYRONE

With dull anger.

I understand that I’ve been a God-damned fool to believe in you!

He walks away from her to pour himself a big drink.
MARY

Her face again sets in stubborn defiance.

I don't know what you mean by "believing in me." All I've felt was distrust and spying and suspicion.

Then accusingly.

Why are you having another drink? You never have more than one before lunch.

Bitterly.

I know what to expect. You will be drunk tonight. Well, it won't be the first time, will it – or the thousandth?

Again, she burst out pleadingly.

Oh, James, please! You don't understand! I'm so worried about Edmund! I'm so afraid he –

TYRONE

I don't want to listen to your excuses, Mary.

MARY

Strickenly.

Excuses? You mean--? Oh, you can't believe that of me! You mustn't believe that James!

Then slipping away into her strange detachment – quite casually.

Shall we not go to lunch, dear? I don't want anything but I know you're hungry.
He walks slowly to where she stands in the doorway. He walks like an old man. As he reaches her she bursts out piteously.

James! I tried so hard! I tried so hard! Please believe--!

**TYRONE**

Moved in spite of himself – helplessly.

I suppose you did, Mary.

Then grief – strickenly.

For the love of God, why couldn’t you have the strength to keep on?

**MARY**

Her face setting into that stubborn denial again.

I don’t know what you’re talking about. Have the strength to keep on what?

**TYRONE**

Helplessly.

Never mind. It’s no use now.

He moves on and she keeps beside him as they disappear in the back parlor.

**CURTAIN**
Home-thoughts, from the Sea

Robert Browning. 1812–1889

NOBLY, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-west died away; Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay; Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay; In the dimmest North-east distance dawn'd Gibraltar grand and gray; 'Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?'—say, Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray, While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

Nondum

Gerard Manly Hopkins

'Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself.' -Isaiah xlv. 15

God, though to Thee our psalm we raise No answering voice comes from the skies; To Thee the trembling sinner prays But no forgiving voice replies; Our prayer seems lost in desert ways, Our hymn in the vast silence dies.

We see the glories of the earth But not the hand that wrought them all: Night to a myriad worlds gives birth, Yet like a lighted empty hall Where stands no host at door or hearth Vacant creation's lamps appal.
We guess; we clothe Thee, unseen King,
With attributes we deem are meet;
Each in in his own imagining
Sets up a shadow in Thy seat;
Yet know not how our gifts to bring,
Where seek Thee with unsandalled feet.

And still th’unbroken silence broods
While ages and while aeons run,
As erst upon chaotic floods
The Spirit hovered ere the sun
Had called the seasons’ changeful moods
And life’s first germs from death had won.

And still th’abysses infinite
Surround the peak from which we gaze.
Deep calls to deep, and blackest night
Giddies the soul with blinding daze
That dares to cast its searching sight
On being’s dread and vacant maze.

And Thou art silent, whilst thy world
Contends about its many creeds
And hosts confront with flags unfurled
And zeal is flushed and pity bleeds
And truth is heard, with tears impearled,
A moaning voice among the reeds.

My hand upon my lips I lay;
The breast’s desponding sob I quell;
I move along life’s tomb-decked way
And listen to the passing bell
Summoning men from speechless day
To death’s more silent, darker spell.
Oh! till Thou givest that sense beyond,
To shew Thee that Thou art, and near,
Let patience with her chastening wand
And lead me child-like by the hand
If still in darkness not in fear.

Speak! whisper to my watching heart
One word-as when a mother speaks
Soft, when she sees her infant start,
Till dimpled joy steals o'er its cheeks.
Then, to behold Thee as Thou art,
I'll wait till morn eternal breaks.

**Questions for Consideration:**

1. What does "home" mean in these readings?

2. How does Browning's poem speak to the notion of home and ventures from home?

3. In Hopkins' poem, what does the title mean? What is the significance of "I'll wait" in the final line?