

KRISHNAGAR ACADEMY,

SUBJECT ENGLISH II

10/7/2020  
CLASS - XII

POEM.

Dear Students,

The poem crossing the Bar, is given to you. Answers will be provided in the next class.

Thank you.

# Crossing the Bar

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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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 tho' 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 crost the bar.





# THE POEM

## Signposts

- An unspecified ship is ready to sail at sunset on a long voyage.
- After “one clear call” the ship will sail out of the harbour, across the sandbar at the harbour’s entrance and into the sea.
- The speaker wants the fullness of the tide so that he can sail out of the harbour, without any turbulence and reach his destination.
- The sound of the “evening bell” signals the darkness and the scheduled sailing.
- The speaker hopes for a cheerful departure, one with no sadness of farewells.
- His journey would lead him far beyond the limits of time and place where he hopes to see the “Pilot face to face” after crossing the sandbar that separates the harbour from the sea.

## The Poem in Detail

### Stanza 1

An unspecified ship is about to sail on a long voyage at sunset. As the sun descends, the light of the evening star, i.e., planet Venus, rises to act like a beacon light for the mariners. After a formal announcement, the “one clear call”, the ship will sail out of the harbour, across the sandbar at the harbour’s entrance and into the sea. Here, the journey across the bar is symbolic of the crossing from the harbour of life into the dark, unknown sea or afterlife and the “clear call” is the call of impending death. The speaker hopes for a gentle crossing out of the harbour, one without any turbulence associated with “*moaning of the bar*”. The sandbar that separates the harbour from the sea is a demarcation between life and death.

### Stanza 2

The speaker wants a tide that is “too full for sound and foam” and whose “moving seems asleep” so that his ship could cross the harbour and enter the sea. Here the tide is suggestive of smooth and peaceful transition of the speaker from life to death. The speaker then refers to the tide as the one “which drew out the boundless deep/ Turns again home.” This is suggestive of the speaker’s soul returning to eternity

just as a tide returns to the depths of the ocean, silently with no turbulence. Here the poet has drawn attention to the fact that the journey into death is merely a part of a cycle of birth and death. The going out is in a way returning home to the “boundless deep” from which the speaker, like everyone else, came.

### **Stanza 3**

In this stanza, unlike the first stanza where the speaker hears a clear call, here he hears the sound of the “*evening bell*” at twilight. After twilight, there is nothing but “the dark”. Here the “evening bell” is suggestive of the death knell, a traditional ringing of a bell to signal that a person has died. It is a metaphor for the speaker’s advanced age and impending death. Sensing his end, the speaker hopes for a cheerful departure, one with “no sadness of farewell” when he embarks on a new journey.

### **Stanza 4**

In the final stanza, the speaker points out the significance of his journey. He is confident that after crossing the bar that separates the harbour and the sea, this journey would lead him far beyond the limits of “Time and Place”, where he would be able to see the “Pilot face to face”. In capitalising the first letter in the word, “Pilot”, the poet has equated the Pilot with God, but God in the guise of a qualified mariner who steers the ship through troubled waters in and out of the harbour. Here the speaker hopes to see the Pilot after he has “crossed the bar”. Tennyson himself has explained this by saying that the Pilot had been aboard all along, identifying him as “that Divine and Unseen who is always guiding us.”