**The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls**

BY [HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/henry-wadsworth-longfellow)

The tide rises, the tide falls,

The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;

Along the sea-sands damp and brown

The traveler hastens toward the town,

      And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,

But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;

The little waves, with their soft, white hands,

Efface the footprints in the sands,

      And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls

Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;

The day returns, but nevermore

Returns the traveler to the shore,

      And the tide rises, the tide falls.

**The Cross of Snow**

BY [HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/henry-wadsworth-longfellow)

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,

   A gentle face — the face of one long dead —

   Looks at me from the wall, where round its head

   The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.

Here in this room she died; and soul more white

   Never through martyrdom of fire was led

   To its repose; nor can in books be read

   The legend of a life more benedight.

There is a mountain in the distant West

   That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines

   Displays a cross of snow upon its side.

Such is the cross I wear upon my breast

   These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes

   And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

**English III Honors - Dott**

**The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls** **Literary Analysis Questions:**

1. Look closely at each stanza. What does each stanza tell you about the passage of time?

2. “Footsteps on the sands of time” is a common expression referring to our mortality and to the passage of time. In the second stanza a similar image appears. What does this **image**suggest has happened to the traveler?

3. What words in the third stanza hint at the traveler’s fate? How does the image of the lively horses contrast with what probably has happened to the traveler?

4. In the second stanza the poet **personifies** the sea and the waves. What words personify the sea and the waves? Do these images create a disturbing effect or a gentle, comforting feeling? Explain.

5. Longfellow was a master craftsman. Identify the places where he uses **alliteration**. How would you describe the emotional effect of these sounds – are they soothing, haunting, upsetting, or something else?

6. At the end of the poem, the tide continues to rise and fall, although the human traveler does not return. How does this contrast reveal the poem’s **theme** – its central insight into the relationship between human life and nature?

7. How does this poem reflect the Romantics’ view of nature and death? How would you compare Longfellow’s attitude with William Cullen Bryant’s in “Thanatopsis?”

**The Cross of Snow**

1. The phrase “watches of the night” usually refers to the rounds made by a guard. What does the phrase mean in line 1?

2. The image “martyrdom of fire” in line 6 might confuse readers who do not know that Longfellow’s wife died in a fire. (A martyr is a person who dies for his or her faith. Many early Christian martyrs were burned to death.) What is Longfellow suggesting about his wife’s character by using this powerful **image**? What other image reinforces this characterization of his wife as saintly?

3. Explain how *sun-defyin* (line 10) suggests conditions of weather and geology that might actually produce a permanent cross of snow on the side of a mountain. How does this poet relate this idea to his own feelings of grief?

4. Why might Longfellow have chosen to use a cross as the **symbol** of his grief?

