

Name:
Date:

Period:
Ms. Lopez

Letters to a Young Poet and "Initiation"
Lesson 3 – Look Deep Inside

Directions: Examine the sections of "Letter One" noted below and provide text-based responses to the questions that follow each section. You will need to refer back to the full text to read the whole section being referenced.

"If your everyday life seems poor . . . far in the distance" (lines 41-50).

1. How does Rilke's assertion that "for the creator there is no poverty and no poor, indifferent place" build upon his earlier ideas?

2. What metaphors does Rilke use to describe childhood and memories? How do these metaphors develop his ideas about writing?

3. Annotate all the references to houses and homes in this section. According to Rilke, where is the artist's true home?

"And if out of this turning within . . . that is the only way one can judge it" (lines 50-55).

4. What does Rilke suggest will be the impact of the "turning within" that he advises? (50).

5. According to Rilke, what makes "good" art? (54). Based on this criteria, who is qualified to judge art?

lines on back →

“So, dear Sir,” to “to whom his whole life is devoted” (lines 55-63).

6. How does Rilke use specific words and phrases in this section to refine his ideas about being a poet?

7. What might Rilke’s choice to capitalize Nature but use the lowercase for creator suggest about how he understands the relationship between artist and inspiration?

8. How does Rilke’s advice on this section develop a central idea in the text?

“But after this descent into yourself . . . quietest hour, can perhaps answer” (lines 64-75).

9. How does Rilke’s statement that those who can live without writing “shouldn’t write at all” refine a central idea? (66)

10. What impact does Rilke believe that “self-searching” will have on the young poet even if he gives up poetry?

11. Paraphrase Rilke’s final piece of advice for the poet. What central idea does it develop?
