What slender Youth bedew'd with liquid odours
Courts thee on Roses in some pleasant Cave,
Pyrrha? for whom bind'st thou
In wreaths thy golden Hair,
Plain in thy neatness? O, how oft shall he
On Faith and changed Gods complain, and Seas
Rough with black winds and storms
Unwonted shall admire,
Who now enjoys thee credulous, all Gold;
Who always vacant, always amiable
Hopes thee; of flattering gales
Unmindful. Hapless they
To whom thou untried seem'st fair. Me in my vow'd
Picture the sacred wall declares 't have hung
My dank and dropping weeds
To the stern God of Sea.

(John Milton)
To Pyrrha

Quis multa gracilis tē puer in rosā
perfūsus liquidīs urget odōribus
grātō, Pyrrha, sub antrō?
Cui flāvam religās comam,

simplex munditiis! Heu quotiens fidem
mūtātōsque deōs flēbit et aspera
nigrīs aequora ventīs
ēmīrābitur insolēns,
qui nunc tē fruitur crēdulus aureā,
qui semper vacūm, semper amābilem
spērat, nescius auroaallācīs. Miscrī, quibus
intemptātā nitēs. Mē tabulā sacer
vōtīvā pariēs indicāt uvidā
suspendisse potenti
vestimenta maris deō.

1. What is happening in the first stanza? How do the order and choice of words reflect the scene?
2. Why is the boy crying in the second stanza? What discovery has he made? Discuss Horace's use of winds and water to symbolize the boy's discovery.
3. Compare the word order in the phrase tē fruitur crēdulus aureā (9) to that in gracilis tē puer (1). What reversal has taken place? Comment on the effectiveness of repetition in lines 9–10.
4. What is a “false breeze” (aurae fallācīs, 11–12) and why would it be dangerous to a sailor and a lover? What pun might Horace be making on the words auroa fallācīs?
5. What persona (for a definition, see question 2 on Catullus 8) does Horace adopt in the final stanza? Why are allusions to the sea so prominent in this poem? What do the poet and the boys have in common?
6. What do the words flāvam (4), auroa (9), nitēs (13), and the name Pyrrha tell us about Pyrrha's attraction to boys? Where else in the poem does Horace use color effectively?
7. Ronald Storr spent many years collecting translations of this poem. The result: Ad Pyrrham, a Polyglot Collection of Translations (Oxford, 1955) with 451 versions in twenty-six languages. One version from that collection is quoted on the opposite page. How well does it succeed?