

**“Break , Break , Break “ by Alfred Lord  
Tennyson**

## The General Meaning

The poem tells about the poet's own sorrow •  
for losing his best friend , Arthur Hallam.

# The Detailed Meaning

The first stanza : The speaker (the poet ) is •  
looking at the sea and wishing he knew how  
to express his grief. He thus addresses the sea  
directly asking the waves to “break , break ,  
break” on to the stony shore . He regrets that  
he can not express his thoughts. He is not •  
really thinking either. The thoughts arise in  
him spontaneously without efforts.

# The Second Stanza

The poet gives pictures (**Illustration**) to show how • people around him are indifferent to his sorrow. He thinks that it is well and good that the fisherman's kid is shouting and playing with his sister .He repeats the same sentence structure by saying it's great that the sailor is singing in his boat. The **Repetition** makes it sound like maybe he doesn't really think it's well and great for those people to be cheerful. Perhaps, he is jealous of their happiness and ability to communicate.

# The Third Stanza

Also , the poet gives another picture to show how the world is indifferent to him. The stately ships pass by him and head to their haven under the hill. They do not stop their voyage and are untroubled .The poet notices the ships but is not distracted by them because his mind is elsewhere . He is just wishing he could touch “ the vanished hand “ and hear “the voice that is still”.

# The Fourth stanza

The poet repeats the first line telling the waves to “ •  
break , break , break “ again, but this time he asks  
them to break at the “foot of thy crags” . Time has  
gone by, even the breaking of the waves has changed  
slightly. May be it’s the tide coming in. The waves  
have changed slightly , and we see that time is  
passing despite the tragedy the speaker has suffered.  
Mournfully , he says that the happy old days when  
his friend was alive will never come back again.

# The poet's intention

The poet wants to say that life never stops •  
when someone dies or suffers .