"This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison"

1. What is the place where this event occurs? Where in England is this? The date? Who are the players in this community? What literally happens to cause the poet to write this poem?

2. What does he imagine the walkers will see?

3. What positive effects emerge as a result of his being injured and staying home?

4. What themes and or psychoanalytic/philosophical theories does this poem suggest? Do they resemble any that we have seen thus far in other poetry this semester?

5. His Lime-tree bower is called a prison. How is that ironic? What images of imprisonment can you find in the poem as a whole?

6. Coleridge explored different ways of reaching oneness between himself (subject) and the outside world (object). One way was to have the mind journey to nature in order to learn to interpret it. Thus harmony lies in nature; the self has to find it. The second way was to give priority to the self, which is seen as the origin of harmony and the voice of nature. Which of these ways (or some combination, perhaps) do you think Coleridge reaches oneness in this poem?

7. Why do you think he keeps repeating “gentle-hearted Charles”? What is the impact of this? What does the footnote say about Charles?

“Dejection: An Ode”

1. For what occasion this poem was written? This poem, in various versions, was addressed to William Sotheby, Sir George Beaumont, Edmund, and finally to a “Lady.” What might be the significance of these multiple addressees? In what ways does the juxtaposition of the occasion and the subject of the poem create irony?
2. There are striking images in the poem: what is the significance of the image of moon, the weather, and the Aeolian Harp? What is an Aeolian Harp? What role do the harp and the wind have in this poem?

3. What is the crisis that he is experiencing in "Dejection"?

4. What has happened to his old creed? Why doesn’t it work anymore? What images foretell the coming of this new doctrine?

5. Though in crisis, how does Coleridge use the poem to try to transform—to accommodate himself to change. What assumptions does he explore, reject, advance about where the healing power for the self lies?

6. How does Coleridge use Wordsworth’s poem “Lucy Gray” (page 583)? Why include it? Does his image of the lost child differ from Wordsworth’s?

7. What gives him relief? Put another way, what insight(s) permanently or temporarily liberate(s) him from dejection?

8. How would you evaluate whether or not he reaches unity or closure or relief in this poem, and what, in contrast, has caused such disunity in his life (here I don't just mean loving someone you can’t have).

9. How would you say these two poems are “Romantic” in the sense of our study of that word in this course?