**Lines 1053-107**

*The wish, that of the living whole   
   Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
   And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,*

*I falter where I firmly trod,  
   And falling with my weight of cares  
   Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,*

*I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
  And gather dust and chaff, and call  
  To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.*

*That I, considering everywhere  
   No life may fail beyond the grave,   
   Derives it not from what we have   
The likest God within the soul?*

*Are God and Nature then at strife,  
   That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
   So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life;*

* The yearning that people have that the totality of humanity will have an afterlife comes from the soul, which is like God.
* Tennyson then questions if God and Nature (meaning the natural world...meaning science) are at odds, because Nature doesn't seem particularly careful about life in general.
* She's "careful of the type." If you're not sure what "type" means, it's scientific jargon that was used during the Victorian period to signify "species." So, Nature is protective of species, but couldn't care less about individuals from that species.
* Tennyson highlights this by noting that out of fifty seeds, only one turns out to be a plant.
* Those aren't very good odds, people.
* Is it any wonder, then, that the speaker is now experiencing doubts? He's looking around the world and seeing how cruel nature is, so now his doubts relating to faith are even worse.
* He's now "falter[ing]" where once he strode confidently.
* He describes his struggle as a groping through the darkness toward God. This is [figurative](http://www.shmoop.com/literature-glossary/figurative-language.html)—his journey upon the "altar-stairs" is not meant to be a physical journey. It's just his journey back to faith.
* The "lame hands of faith" in the last stanza continue the helpless [image](http://www.shmoop.com/literature-glossary/imagery.html) of the inarticulate infant from the previous canto.
* At the end of this canto, the speaker seems to be a bit more secure in his faith. He's at least starting to have some hope.
* Did you notice how he's struggling with more cosmic issues relating to man's place in the natural and spiritual worlds?
* Maybe that shift that we noticed around Canto 50 is heading more in this direction. Onward to find out…