

General Questions--Petrarch's Poetry

Note: Use the Petrarch metaphors chart to gather materials to answer the following questions.

1. What is the subject/topic of Petrarch's poetry?
2. What is his attitude toward love? What kind of experience is it?
3. Much of Petrarch's poetry contains figurative language that describes himself and Laura, or at least a speaker and his beloved. What kind of picture do you get of the beloved? What do we learn about her? What picture do we get of the speaker of the poem? What do we learn about him?
4. What is the cumulative effect of the figurative language in each poem?
5. Analyze the first and last poem in your book (I and CCCLXV). What is the speaker worried about? What is his error? Why is it an error? Why does he ask for forgiveness? What kinds of figurative language are used in the poems?
6. Look at poems III, XC, and CCXCII. These poems provide descriptions of the experience of love. What kinds of figurative language (e.g., metaphors) are used to describe the speaker's emotions? How does the speaker describe his interaction with the beloved?
7. Look at poem CXXVI. How is the beloved described? the speaker? To what do these images add up?
8. Look at poem CXXIX. How is nature used in this poem? Why does the speaker seek out uninhabited places and shun those where people live? How is the beloved described in this poem? the speaker? To what do these images add up?
9. Look at poems CXXIV, CCLXV, and CCXCII. How is the beloved described? the speaker? What metaphors are used? To what do they add up? What happens to the beloved in CCXCII?