

Read Paragraph 1 of “Letter One” of Rainer Maria Rilke’s Letters to a Young Poet from “Paris, February 17, 1903, Dear Sir, Your letter arrived” through “beside our own small, transitory life,” and answer the following questions:

1. What might Rilke’s use of the word *confidence* reveal about the contents of the young poet’s initial letter?
2. What might Rilke’s use of the word *foreign* reveal about the relationship he perceives between art and criticism?
3. What can you infer about the purpose of the young poet’s letter from Rilke’s refusal?
4. According to Rilke, what results from criticism?
5. What is Rilke saying about the power of criticism to influence art? Use evidence from the text to support your response.
6. What words repeat in this passage? What belief does Rilke challenge through these repetitions?
7. What is the meaning of *transitory* in the context of the passage?
8. What “life” does Rilke attribute to works of art? How does the life of art compare to human life?