“The Hound”

Life the hound

Equivocal

Comes at a bound

Either to rend me

Or befriend me.

I cannot tell

The hound’s intent

Till he has sprung

At my bare hand

With teeth or tongue.

Meanwhile I stand

And wait the event.

--Robert Francis

**Directions: Work together in small groups to discuss the poem. If you print this handout, write your denotations to the right of the poem in the space above and use the space below to write your answers in complete sentences. If you do not print, download this file and save to your OneDrive. Use the comment button in the upper-right-hand corner to add denotations, and type your responses to each question below.**

1. *Question.* For each of the underlined words above, first determine the correct part of speech (noun, verb, adjective) by looking at sentence structure or context clues. Write or type (using the comment button) the correct definitions for each of these words to the right of the poem. This will help in your understanding of the poem.

2. Of the four questions (think, feel, experience, and question), this poem primarily invites the reader to *experience* and *think*. In the space below, write or type the situation of this poem based on the *experience* the poet gives you. What is the situation? What is going on? Why does the speaker of the poem choose to “stand and wait the event”?

3. *Think.* Identify the metaphor in this poem. What is the literal “A” presented and the figurative “B” to which the “A” is compared. Is it directly stated or implied? Extended or not? Why is this particular breed of dog—as opposed to a Terrier or Golden Retriever, or Poodle—an important choice?

4. *Think.* In Taylor Mali’s poem, “Tony Steinberg: Brave Seventh Grade Viking Warrior,” there were smaller subsets of the overall metaphor. For example, Tony’s classmates were compared to Viking warriors fighting a battle alongside their friend. In this poem, “tongue” and “teeth” are part of the dog, so it logically follows that they are also part of the metaphor. The challenge is that the metaphors of “teeth” and “tongue” are implied. What are life’s “teeth” and “tongue” do you suppose?

5. *Think.* How did you arrive at this interpretation of “teeth” and “tongue”? Be explicit and specific.