



Discussion Questions for Bill Streever's *AND SOON I HEARD A ROARING WIND*

1. In *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind*, Streever presents the natural history of wind and the human history of forecasting against the backdrop of a sailing narrative. How does the mix of science and history with a sailing narrative add to (or subtract from) the reading experience?
2. How would you describe *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind* to friends? Is it a science book or an adventure story?
3. People often complain about weather forecast accuracy. After reading *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind*, are you more likely or less likely to complain about forecast accuracy?
4. Streever himself, a professional biologist, was delighted when he learned about ballooning spiders, and even more delighted to find some aboard *Rocinante* off the coast of Cuba. Likewise, in researching *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind* he was excited to learn of Lawrence Swan's work on the Aeolian biome. Did he manage to convey his delight to readers?

5. *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind*, like Streever's earlier books *Cold* and *Heat*, can be seen as a series of anecdotes or digressions, but as part of the writing process Streever claims to map out the various parts of the book and he says that he endeavors to build a tapestry that joins very diverse subject matter, ultimately leaving readers with a whole that is greater than its parts. Is this writing strategy apparent in his work? If so, at what point does it become apparent in *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind*?
6. The working title for *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind* was, simply, *Wind*—another 4-letter title in keeping with *Cold* and *Heat*. Did you recognize the title as a line from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*? Is the title more compelling than the 4-letter working title?
7. In Streever's earlier books, illustrations were sketches drawn to accompany chapter titles. In *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind*, illustrations—mostly photographs—were selected to supplement the text and were integrated within the chapters. Which approach works best for Streever's particular brand of nonfiction science narratives?
8. The science writer Ned Rozell once said that Streever's writing, in effect, "tricked" readers into painlessly learning something new about the natural world. Did you learn anything from *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind* without feeling like Streever was lecturing or dragging you into an academic seminar? If so, can you describe two or three instances in which Streever led you painlessly into new material?
9. Many admirable historical figures appear in *And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind*. Of these, which were the most admirable to you? How many of them were new to you? Which were Streever's favorites?
10. Reviewers often comment on both the lyrical quality of Streever's writing and on its dry humor. Do these qualities belong in books that are fundamentally about science and history? Why would Streever, a trained scientist, choose to write in this style? Do you know of other scientists who write in a similar style?