

**Journeys: Moving Forward, Looking Back**  
**Close Reading Guide: “Bilingual/Bilingüe”**

Answer the following questions about Rhina P. Espaillat’s poem, “Bilingual/Bilingüe.”

1. In the first line, Espaillat writes, “My father liked them separate.” What does “them” refer to? Why might he want to keep these two things separate?
2. How does the daughter react to her father’s request? What evidence in the poem supports your answer?
3. What stylistic choices and literary devices does Espaillat use in order to convey her message? In what ways does the structure of the poem contribute to its meaning?
4. Does the father ever become comfortable with his daughter’s love of words in either language? Cite evidence in the text that supports your answer.
5. Rhina Espaillat was seven years old in 1939, when her family was forced to leave the Dominican Republic during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. They settled in New York City. What does this information add to your understanding of the poem?