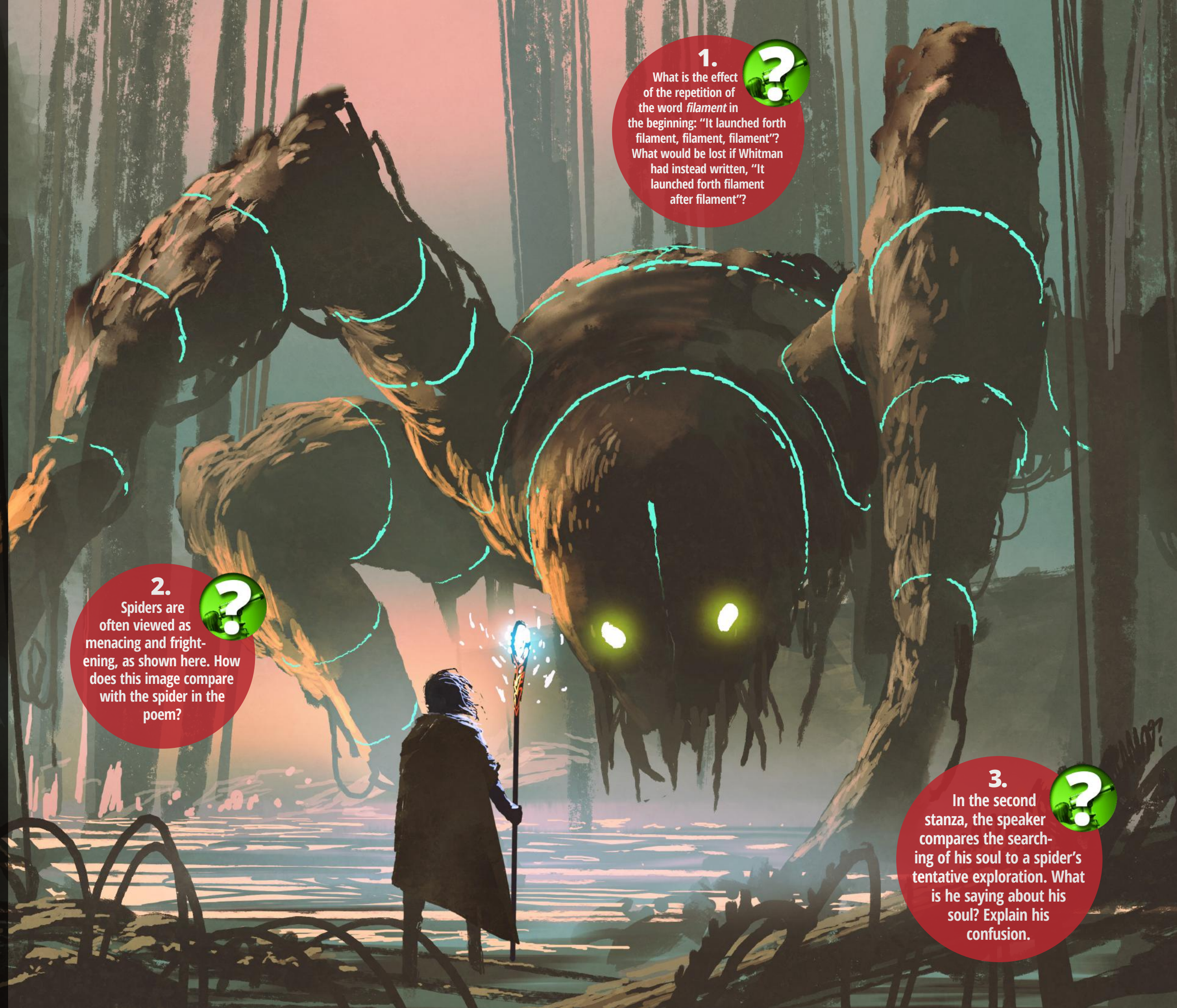


A Noiseless Patient Spider

WALT WHITMAN

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory
it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant, vast
surrounding,
It launched forth filament, filament,
filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly
speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless
oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing,
throwing, seeking the spheres to
connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be
form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling
catch somewhere, O my soul.



1.

What is the effect of the repetition of the word *filament* in the beginning: "It launched forth filament, filament, filament"? What would be lost if Whitman had instead written, "It launched forth filament after filament"?



2.

Spiders are often viewed as menacing and frightening, as shown here. How does this image compare with the spider in the poem?



3.

In the second stanza, the speaker compares the searching of his soul to a spider's tentative exploration. What is he saying about his soul? Explain his confusion.



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