

## Metaphysical Poetry

John Donne

### **A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning**

BY JOHN DONNE

As virtuous men pass mildly away,  
And whisper to their souls to go,  
Whilst some of their sad friends do say  
The breath goes now, and some say, No:

So let us melt, and make no noise,  
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;  
'Twere profanation of our joys  
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,  
Men reckon what it did, and meant;  
But trepidation of the spheres,  
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love  
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit  
Absence, because it doth remove  
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,  
That our selves know not what it is,  
Inter-assured of the mind,  
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,  
Though I must go, endure not yet  
A breach, but an expansion,  
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so  
As stiff twin compasses are two;  
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show  
To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,  
Yet when the other far doth roam,

It leans and hearkens after it,  
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
And makes me end where I begun.

### **Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud**

BY JOHN DONNE

Death, be not proud, though some have called  
thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost  
overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill  
me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures  
be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more  
must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and  
desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness  
dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as  
well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou  
then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt  
die.

**Song: Go and catch a falling star**

BY JOHN DONNE

Go and catch a falling star,  
Get with child a mandrake root,  
Tell me where all past years are,  
Or who cleft the devil's foot,  
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,  
Or to keep off envy's stinging,  
And find  
What wind  
Serves to advance an honest mind.  
If thou be'st born to strange sights,  
Things invisible to see,  
Ride ten thousand days and nights,  
Till age snow white hairs on thee,  
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me,  
All strange wonders that befell thee,  
And swear,  
No where  
Lives a woman true, and fair.  
If thou find'st one, let me know,  
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;  
Yet do not, I would not go,  
Though at next door we might meet;  
Though she were true, when you met her,  
And last, till you write your letter,  
Yet she

Will be

False, ere I come, to two, or three.

**Easter Wings**

BY GEORGE HERBERT

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,  
Though foolishly he lost the same,  
Decaying more and more,  
Till he became  
Most poore:  
With thee  
O let me rise  
As larks, harmoniously,  
And sing this day thy victories:  
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.  
My tender age in sorrow did beginne  
And still with sicknesses and shame.  
Thou didst so punish sinne,  
That I became  
Most thinne.  
With thee  
Let me combine,  
And feel thy victorie:  
For, if I imp my wing on thine,  
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

## **Virtue**

BY GEORGE HERBERT

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky;  
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,  
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave  
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;  
Thy root is ever in its grave,  
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,  
A box where sweets compacted lie;  
My music shows ye have your closes,  
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like season'd timber, never gives;  
But though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.

## **To His Coy Mistress**

BY ANDREW MARVELL

Had we but world enough and time,  
This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down, and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love's day.  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the flood,  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.  
My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires and more slow;  
An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;  
Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.  
For, lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear  
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found;  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
My echoing song; then worms shall try  
That long-preserved virginity,  
And your quaint honour turn to dust,  
And into ashes all my lust;  
The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,  
Now let us sport us while we may,  
And now, like amorous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour  
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.  
Let us roll all our strength and all  
Our sweetness up into one ball,  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Through the iron gates of life:  
Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.