



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.

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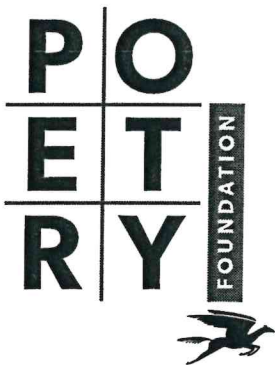
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Air and Angels

BY JOHN DONNE

Twice or thrice had I lov'd thee,
 Before I knew thy face or name;
 So in a voice, so in a shapeless flame
 Angels affect us oft, and worshipp'd be;
 Still when, to where thou wert, I came,
 Some lovely glorious nothing I did see.
 But since my soul, whose child love is,
 Takes limbs of flesh, and else could nothing do,
 More subtle than the parent is
 Love must not be, but take a body too;
 And therefore what thou wert, and who,
 I bid Love ask, and now
 That it assume thy body, I allow,
 And fix itself in thy lip, eye, and brow.

Whilst thus to ballast love I thought,
 And so more steadily to have gone,
 With wares which would sink admiration,
 I saw I had love's pinnacle overfraught;
 Ev'ry thy hair for love to work upon
 Is much too much, some fitter must be sought;
 For, nor in nothing, nor in things
 Extreme, and scatt'ring bright, can love inhere;
 Then, as an angel, face, and wings
 Of air, not pure as it, yet pure, doth wear,
 So thy love may be my love's sphere;
 Just such disparity
 As is 'twixt air and angels' purity,
 'Twixt women's love, and men's, will ever be.

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To His Mistress Going to Bed

BY JOHN DONNE

Come, Madam, come, all rest my powers defy,
 Until I labour, I in labour lie.
 The foe oft-times having the foe in sight,
 Is tir'd with standing though he never fight.
 Off with that girdle, like heaven's Zone glistening,
 But a far fairer world encompassing.
 Unpin that spangled breastplate which you wear,
 That th'eyes of busy fools may be stopped there.
 Unlace yourself, for that harmonious chime,
 Tells me from you, that now it is bed time.
 Off with that happy busk, which I envy,
 That still can be, and still can stand so nigh.
 Your gown going off, such beauteous state reveals,
 As when from flowery meads th'hill's shadow steals.
 Off with that wiry Coronet and shew
 The hairy Diadem which on you doth grow:
 Now off with those shoes, and then safely tread
 In this love's hallow'd temple, this soft bed.
 In such white robes, heaven's Angels used to be
 Received by men; Thou Angel bringst with thee
 A heaven like Mahomet's Paradise; and though
 Ill spirits walk in white, we easily know,
 By this these Angels from an evil sprite,
 Those set our hairs, but these our flesh upright.
 Licence my roving hands, and let them go,
 Before, behind, between, above, below.
 O my America! my new-found-land,
 My kingdom, safeliest when with one man mann'd,
 My Mine of precious stones, My Empirie,
 How blest am I in this discovering thee!
 To enter in these bonds, is to be free;
 Then where my hand is set, my seal shall be.
 Full nakedness! All joys are due to thee,
 As souls unbodied, bodies uncloth'd must be,
 To taste whole joys. Gems which you women use

Are like Atlanta's balls, cast in men's views,
That when a fool's eye lighteth on a Gem,
His earthly soul may covet theirs, not them.
Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made
For lay-men, are all women thus array'd;
Themselves are mystic books, which only we
(Whom their imputed grace will dignify)
Must see reveal'd. Then since that I may know;
As liberally, as to a Midwife, shew
Thy self: cast all, yea, this white linen hence,
There is no penance due to innocence.
To teach thee, I am naked first; why then
What needst thou have more covering than a man.

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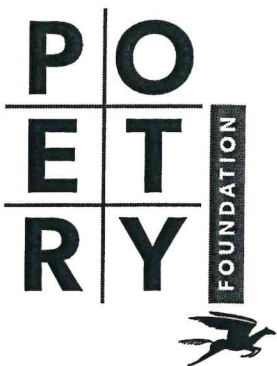
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The Flea

BY JOHN DONNE

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is;
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, nay more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that, self-murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;
'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:
Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (1996)

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Holy Sonnets: Batter my heart, three-person'd God

BY JOHN DONNE

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

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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.

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The Sun Rising

BY JOHN DONNE

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
 Why dost thou thus,
 Through windows, and through curtains call on us?
 Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
 Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
 Late school boys and sour prentices,
 Go tell court huntsmen that the king will ride,
 Call country ants to harvest offices,
 Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
 Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
 Why shouldst thou think?
 I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
 But that I would not lose her sight so long;
 If her eyes have not blinded thine,
 Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,
 Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine
 Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.
 Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
 And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes, I,
 Nothing else is.
 Princes do but play us; compared to this,
 All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
 Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,
 In that the world's contracted thus.
 Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
 To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
 Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
 This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere.

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The Good-Morrow

BY JOHN DONNE

I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I
Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?
But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking souls,
Which watch not one another out of fear;
For love, all love of other sights controls,
And makes one little room an everywhere.
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown,
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
Where can we find two better hemispheres,
Without sharp north, without declining west?
Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (1983)

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