

## Metaphysical Poems

### “The Sun Rising” (1633)

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?  
(5) 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,  
(10) 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.  
(15) If her eyes have not blinded thine,  
Look, and to-morrow late tell me,  
Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine  
Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.  
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,  
(20) 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 honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.  
(25) 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;  
(30) This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere.

“Holy Sonnet 14” (1633)

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.
- (5) 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,  
(10) 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.

“Easter Wings” (1633)

By George Herbert

- Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,  
Though foolishly he lost the same,  
Decaying more and more,  
Till he became  
(5) Most poore:  
With thee  
O let me rise  
As larks, harmoniously,  
And sing this day thy victories:  
(10) 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  
(15) Most thinne.  
With thee  
Let me combine,  
And feel thy victorie:  
For, if I imp my wing on thine,  
(20) Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

“How Soon Hath Time” (1645)

By John Milton

- How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
Stol'n on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!  
My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
- (5) Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth  
That I to manhood am arriv'd so near;  
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.  
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
- (10) It shall be still in strictest measure ev'n  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heav'n:  
All is, if I have grace to use it so  
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

“When I Consider How My Light Is Spent” (1673)

By John Milton

- When I consider how my light is spent,  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
- (5) To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest He returning chide;  
“Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?”  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need
- (10) Either man's work or His own gifts. Who best  
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state  
Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait.”