

DEath be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not foe,
 For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
 Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee.

From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
 Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
 And sooneft our best men with thee doe goe,
 Rest of their bones, and foules deliverie.

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87

Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell,
 And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
 And better then thy stroake ; why swell'st thou then ?
 One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
 And death shall be no more ; death, thou shalt die.

SPit in my face you Jewes, and pierce my fide,
 Buffet, and scoffe, scourge, and crucifie mee,
 For I have finn'd, and finn'd, and onely hee,
 Who could do no iniquitie, hath dyed :

But by my death can not be fatisfied
 My finnes, which paffe the Jewes impiety :
 They kill'd once an inglorious man, but I
 Crucifie him daily, being now glorified.

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2

But who am I, that dare difpute with thee
 O God ? Oh ! of thine onely worthy blood,
 And my teares, make a heavenly Lethean flood,
 And drowne in it my finnes blacke memorie ;
 That thou remember them, fome claime as debt,
 I thinke it mercy, if thou wilt forget.

23

IF poyfonous mineralls, and if that tree,
Whofe fruit threw death on elfe immortall us,
If lecherous goats, if serpents envious
Cannot be damn'd ; Alas ; why should I bee ?

Why should intent or reafon, borne in mee,
Make finnes, elfe equall, in mee more heinous ?
And mercy being eafie, and glorious
To God ; in his fterne wrath, why threatens hee ?

Oh let mee then, his frange love ftill admire :
Kings pardon, but he bore our punifhment.
And *Iacob* came cloth'd in vile harfh attire
But to fupplant, and with gainfull intent :
God cloth'd himfelfe in vile mans flefh, that fo
Hee might be weake enough to fuffer woe.

The Holy Sonnets of John Donne

22

46

Why are wee by all creatures waited on ?
Why doe the prodigall elements supply
Life and food to mee, being more pure then I,
Simple, and further from corruption ?

Why brook'st thou, ignorant horfe, subjection ?
Why doſt thou bull, and bore fo feelily
Diffemble weakneſſe, and by one mans froke die,
Whofe whole kinde, you might fwallow and feed upon ?

They ſee idolatrous lovers weepe and mourne,
And vile blaſphemous Conjurers to call
On Ieſus name, and Phariſaicall
Diffemblers feigne devotion. Then turne
O penſive foule, to God, for he knowes beſt
Thy true grieve, for he put it in my breaft.

Holy Sonnets

John Donne

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In Grierson's numbering, the three sequences of the sonnets are:

original

I, II, III, XVI, IV, VI, V, VII, IX, VIII, X, XV

Westmoreland 1620

I–III, XVI, IV, VI, V, VII, IX, VIII, X, XV, XI–XIV, XVII–XIX

Poems 1633

II, IV, VI, VII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI

This booklet has pages of size A6. To obtain it as a quarto of one signature from A4 sheets, I have used the pdf–pages package.

Weaker I am, woe is mee, and worfe then you,
 You have not finn'd, nor need be timorous.
 But wonder at a greater wonder, for to us
 Created nature doth these things subdue,
 But their Creator, whom fin, nor nature tyed,
 For us, his Creatures, and his foes, hath dyed.

How shall my mindes white truth by them be try'd?

By circumfances, and by signes that be
 Apparent in us, not immediately,
 But if our mindes to these foules be defcry'd
 That valiantly I helpe wide mouth o'rfride :

And adds this even to full felicitie,
 As Angels, then my fathers foule doth fee,
 If faithfull foules be alike glorifi'd

original / Westmoreland 1620 / Poems 1633 / Grierson

The separation of each sonnet visibly into two quatrains and a sestet is my innovation.
 (Note continues after the Sonnets)

Thou haft made me, And fhall thy worke decay?
 Repaire me now, for now mine end doth hafte,
 I runne to death, and death meets me as faft,
 And all my pleafures are like yefterday;

I dare not move my dimme eyes any way,
 Defpaire behind, and death before doth caft
 Such terrour, and my feeble flefh doth waffe
 By finne in it, which it t'wards hell doth weigh;

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I durft not view heaven yefterday; and to day
 In prayers, and flattering fpeeches I court God:
 To morrow I quake with true feare of his rod.
 So my devout fitts come and go away
 Like a fantaftique Ague: fave that here
 Thofe are my belt dayes, when I fhake with feare.

What if this prefent were the worlds laft night?
 Marke in my heart, O Soule, where thou doft dwell,
 The picture of Chrifft crucified, and tell
 Whether that countenance can thee affright,
 Teares in his quench the amazing light,
 Blood fills his frownes, which from his pierced head fell.
 And can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell,
 Which pray'd forgiveness for his foes fierce fpite?

But let them fleepe, Lord, and mee mourne a fpace,
 For, if above all thefe, my finnes abound,
 Tis late to afke abundance of thy grace,
 When wee are there; here on this lowly ground,
 Teach mee how to repent; for that's as good
 As if thou'hadft feal'd my pardon, with thy blood.

O H, to vex me, contraries meet in one :
 Inconflancy unnaturally hath begott
 A conflant habit ; that when I would not
 I change in vowes, and in devotione.

As humorous is my contritione
 As my prophane Love, and as foone forgott :
 As ridlingly diftemper'd, cold and hott,
 As praying, as mute ; as infinite, as none.

42

81

Onely thou art above, and when towards thee
 By thy leave I can looke, I rife againe ;
 But our old fubtle foe fo templeth me,
 That not one houre my felfe I can fuffaine ;
 Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art,
 And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart.

1 / 1 / - / 1

7

A T the round earths imagin'd corners, blow
 Your trumpets, Angells, and arife, arife
 From death, you numberleffe infinities
 Of foules, and to your fcattered bodies goe,

All whom the flood did, and fire fhall o'erthrow,
 All whom warre, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
 Despaire, law, chance, hath flaine, and you whose eyes,
 Shall behold God, and never taft deaths woe.

No, but as in my idolatrie
 I faid to all my profane miftreffes,
 Beauty, of pittty, foulneffe onely is
 A figne of rigour : fo I fay to thee,
 To wicked fpirits are horrid fhapes affign'd,
 This beauteous forme affures a pitious minde.

BAtter my heart, three perfon'd God ; for, you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend ;
That I may rife, and stand, o'erthrow mee, and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.

I, like an unſurpt towne, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reaſon your viceroy in mee, mee mould defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.

Then, as my foule, to heaven her firſt ſeate, takes flight,
And earth-borne body, in the earth ſhall dwell,
So, fall my finnes, that all may have their right,
To where they are bred, and would preſſe me, to hell.
Impute me righteous, thus purg'd of evill,
For thus I leave the world, the fleſh, the devill.

AS due by many titles I reſigne
My ſelfe to thee, O God, firſt I was made
By thee, and for thee, and when I was decay'd
Thy blood bought that, the which before was thine ;

I am thy ſonne, made with thy ſelfe to ſhine,
Thy fervant, whole paines thou haſt ſtill repaid,
Thy ſheepe, thine Image, and, till I betray'd
My ſelfe, a temple of thy Spirit divine ;

Dwells ſhe with us, or like adventuring knights
Firſt travaile we to ſeeke and then make Love ?
Betray kind huſband thy ſpoule to our fights,
And let myne amorous foule court thy mild Dove,
Who is moſt trew, and pleaſing to thee, then
When ſhe is embrac'd and open to moſt men.

How me deare Chrif, thy fpoufe, fo bright and clear.
 What ! is it She, which on the other fhore
 Goes richly painted ? or which rob'd and tore
 Laments and mournes in Germany and here ?

Sleepes fhe a thoufand, then peepes up one yeare ?
 Is fhe felfe truth and errs ? now new, now outwore ?
 Doth fhe, and did fhe, and fhall fhe evermore
 On one, on feaven, or on no hill appeare ?

40

91

Why doth the devill then ufurpe on mee ?
 Why doth he fteale, nay ravifh that's thy right ?
 Except thou rife and for thine owne worke fight,
 Oh I mall foone defpaire, when I doe fee
 That thou lov'ft mankind well, yet wilt' not chufe me,
 And Satan hates mee, yet is loth to lofe mee.

His is my playes laft fcene, here heavens appoint
 My pilgrimages laft mile ; and my race
 Idly, yet quickly runne, hath this laft pace,
 My fpan laft inch, my minutes lateft point,
 And gluttonous death, will instantly unjoynt
 My body, and foule, and I fhall fleepe a pace,
 But my ever-waking part fhall fee that face,
 Whofe feare already shakes my every joynt:

Yet dearely I love you, and would be loved faine,
 But am betroth'd unto your enemye :
 Divorce mee, untie, or breake that knot againe,
 Take mee to you, imprifon mee, for I
 Except you' enthral me, never mall be free,
 Nor ever chaft, except you ravifh mee.

O Might thofe fighes and teares returne againe
 Into my breaft and eyes, which I have fpent,
 That I might in this holy difcontent
 Mourne with fome fruit, as I have mourn'd in vaine ;

In mine Idolatry what fhowres of raine
 Mine eyes did wafte ? what griefs my heart did rent ?
 That fufferance was my finne ; now I repent ;
 'Caufe I did fuffer I muft fuffer paine.

10

34

But why fhould I begg more Love, when as thou
 Doft wooe my foule for hers ; offering all thine :
 And doft not only feare leaft I allow
 My Love to Saints and Angels things divine,
 But in thy tender jealofy doft doubt
 Leaft the World, Flefh, yea Devill putt thee out.

Wilt thou love God, as he thee ! then digeft,
 My Soule, this wholfome meditation,
 How God the Spirit, by Angels waited on
 In heaven, doth make his Temple in thy brest.
 The Father having begot a Sonne moft bleft,
 And ftill beggetting (for he ne'r begonne)
 Hath deign'd to chufe thee by adoption,
 Coheire to his glory, and Sabbaths endleffe reft.

Or wafh it, if it muft be drown'd no more :
 But oh it muft be burnt ! alas the fire
 Of luft and envie have burnt it heretofore,
 And made it fouler ; Let their flames retire,
 And burne me ô Lord, with a fiery zeale
 Of thee and thy houfe, which doth in eating heale.

I Am a little world made cunningly
 Of Elements, and an Angellike spight,
 But black finne hath betraid to endlesse night
 My worlds both parts, and (oh) both parts must die.

You which beyond that heaven which was most high
 Have found new sphears, and of new lands can write,
 Powre new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
 Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly,

And as a robb'd man, which by fearch doth finde
 His stolne stuffe fold, must lose or buy't againe:
 The Sonne of glory came downe, and was slaine,
 Us whom he'had made, and Satan stolne, to unbinde.
 'Twas much, that man was made like God before,
 But, that God should be made like man, much more.

Since the whom I lov'd hath payd her last debt
 To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
 And her Soule early into heaven ravished,
 Wholly on heavenly things my mind is sett.

Here the admiring her my mind did whett
 To seeke thee God; so freames do shew their head;
 But though I have found thee, and thou my thirt hast fed,
 A holy thirty droply melts mee yett.

Th'hydroptique drunkard, and night-scouting thiefe,
 The itchy Lecher, and felfe tickling proud
 Have the remembrance of past joyes, for reliefe
 Of comming ills. To (poore) me is allow'd
 No ease; for, long, yet vehement grieve hath beene
 Th'effect and cause, the punishment and finne.

O my blacke Soule ! now thou art summoned
 By sicknesse, deaths herald, and champion ;
 Thou art like a pilgrim, which abroad hath done
 Treason, and durst not turne to whence hee is fled,

Or like a thiefe, which till deaths doome be read,
 Willneth himselfe delivered from prison ;
 But damn'd and hal'd to execution,
 Willneth that still he might be imprisoned.

12

Yet fuch are thy laws, that men argue yet
 Whether a man thofe statutes can fulfill ;
 None doth ; but all-healing grace and fpirit
 Revive againe what law and letter kill.
 Thy lawes abridgement, and thy laft command
 Is all but love ; Oh let this laft Will stand !

F^Ather, part of his double interest
 Unto thy kingdome, thy Sonne gives to mee,
 His joynture in the knottie Trinitie
 Hee keepes, and gives to me his deaths conquest.
 This Lambe, whose death, with life the world hath blest,
 Was from the worlds beginning flaine, and he
 Hath made two Wills, which with the Legacie
 Of his and thy kingdome, doe thy Sonnes invest.

Yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lacke ;
 But who shall give thee that grace to beginne ?
 Oh make thy selfe with holy mourning blacke,
 And red with blushing, as thou art with sinne ;
 Or wash thee in Christs blood, which hath this might
 That being red, it dyes red foules to white.