

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC.
Also Publishes

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE
edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE
edited by Nina Baym et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY FICTION
edited by R. V. Cassill and Joyce Carol Oates

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
edited by M. H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF LITERATURE BY WOMEN
edited by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY POETRY
edited by Jahan Ramazani, Richard Ellmann, and Robert O'Clair

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY
edited by Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT FICTION
edited by R. V. Cassill and Richard Bausch

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF THEORY AND CRITICISM
edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF WORLD LITERATURE
edited by Sarah Lawall et al.

THE NORTON FACSIMILE OF THE FIRST FOLIO OF SHAKESPEARE
prepared by Charlton Hinman

THE NORTON INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE
edited by Jerome Beaty, Alison Booth, J. Paul Hunter, and Kells J. Mans

THE NORTON INTRODUCTION TO THE SHORT NOVEL
edited by Jerome Beaty

THE NORTON READER
edited by Linda H. Peterson, John C. Brereton, and Joan E. Hartman

THE NORTON SAMPLER
edited by Thomas Cooley

THE NORTON SHAKESPEARE, BASED ON THE OXFORD EDITION
edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al.

For a complete list of Norton Critical Editions, visit
www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nce/home.htm

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

JOHN DONNE'S POETRY

AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS
CRITICISM

SECOND EDITION

Selected and Edited by

ARTHUR L. CLEMENTS

HARPUR COLLEGE, BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY



W. W. NORTON & COMPANY · New York · London



Contents

Preface to the Second Edition	xi
Preface to the First Edition	xv
The Texts of the Poems	
SONGS AND SONNETS	
The Good-Morrow	3
Song ("Go and catch a falling star,")	3
Woman's Constancy	4
The Undertaking	5
The Sun Rising	6
The Indifferent	6
Love's Usury	7
The Canonization	8
The Triple Fool	9
Lovers' Infiniteness	10
Song ("Sweetest love, I do not go")	10
The Legacy	11
A Fever	12
Air and Angels	13
Break of Day	14
The Anniversary	14
A Valediction: Of My Name, in the Window	15
Twickenham Garden	17
A Valediction: Of the Book	18
Community	19
Love's Growth	20
Love's Exchange	21
Confined Love	22

9/20/07 \$16.66

Copyright © 1992, 1966 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.
The text of this book is composed in Electra,
with the display set in Bernhard Modern.

Composition by Vail Composition.
Manufacturing by Maple-Vail.
Book design by Antonnia Krass.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Donne, John, 1572-1631.

[Poems. Selections]

John Donne's poetry : authoritative texts, criticism / selected
and edited by Arthur L. Clements. — 2nd ed.

p. cm. — (A Norton critical edition)

Includes bibliographical references.

1. Donne, John, 1572-1631 — Criticism and interpretation.

I. Clements, Arthur L., II. Title.

PR2246 C57 1991

821'.3 — dc20 90-21390

ISBN 0-393-96062-5

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110
W. W. Norton & Company, Ltd., Castle House, 75/76 Wells Street,
London W1T 3QT

Songs and Sonnets

The Good-Morrow

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,² all pleasures fancies be.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

5

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-discoveres to new worlds have gone,
Let maps to others, worlds on worlds have shown,³
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.⁴

10

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;⁵
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike that none do slacken, none can die.

15

20

Song

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,⁶

1 Legend tells of seven Christian youths who, fleeing from Roman persecution, took refuge in a cave and slept unharmed for two centuries.

2 Except for this.

3 Let maps reveal to other people many worlds.

4 According to the theory of Donne's time, every man was thought to be a little world in himself, a *microcosm*, paralleling the great world, the *macrocosm*.

5 Scholastic doctrine held that decay will eventually occur when a thing is composed of unequal or dissimilar elements.

6 The mandrake root's forked shape roughly resembles the human body. But the mandrake was also thought to be a soporific, an aphrodisiac, and a cause of fruitfulness in women. See D. C. Allen, *Modern Language Notes* 74 (1959): 393-97, and cf. "Twickenham Garden," line 17.

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

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
 Nowhere

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;
 And last, till you write your letter,
 Yet she
 Will be

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

Woman's Constancy

Now thou hast loved me one whole day,
 Tomorrow when thou leav'st, what wilt thou say?
 Wilt thou then antedate some new-made vow?
 Or say that now

We are not just those persons which we were?
 Or, that oaths made in reverential fear
 Of Love, and his wrath, any may forswear?
 Or, as true deaths true marriages untie,
 So lovers' contracts, images of those,
 Bind but till sleep, death's image, them unloose?
 Or, your own end to justify,
 For having purposed change, and falsehood, you
 Can have no way but falsehood to be true?
 Vain lunatic,⁷ against these 'scapes I could

7. Under sway of the moon, and thus changeable, inconstant, as well as madly foolish person; "scapes" means "excuses," "evasions."

THE UNDERTAKING

Dispute, and conquer, if I would,
 Which I abstain to do,
 For by tomorrow, I may think so too.

The Undertaking

I have done one braver thing
 Than all the Worthies⁸ did,
 And yet a braver thence doth spring,
 Which is, to keep that hid.
 It were but madness now to impart
 The skill of specular stone,⁹
 When he which can have learned the art
 To cut it can find none.

So, if I now should utter this,
 Others (because no more
 Such stuff to work upon there is)
 Would love but as before.

But he who loveliness within
 Hath found, all outward loathes,
 For he who color loves, and skin,
 Loves but their oldest clothes.

If, as I have, you also do
 Virtue attired in woman see,
 And dare love that, and say so too,
 And forget the He and She,

And if this love, though placed so,
 From profane men you hide,
 Which will no faith on this bestow,
 Or, if they do, deride:

Then you have done a braver thing
 Than all the Worthies did.
 And a braver thence will spring
 Which is, to keep that hid.

8. Outstanding heroes of antiquity.
 9. The technique or craft of cutting old selenite. an ancient transparent material used for glazing, but no longer available in Donne's time.

The Sun Rising

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 schoolboys, 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 the Indias of spice and mine¹
 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.²

Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,
 In that the world's contracted thus;
 Thine age asks³ 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.

The Indifferent

I can love both fair and brown,
 Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays,
 Her who loves loneliness best, and her who masks and plays,
 Her whom the country formed, and whom the town,
 Her who believes, and her who tries,
 Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
 And her who is dry cork, and never cries;
 I can love her, and her, and you, and you,
 I can love any, so she be not true.

1. The East Indies, source of spices, and the West Indies, source of precious metals.

2. Alchemy was often regarded as a fraud.

3. Requires.

Will no other vice content you?
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
 Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
 Or doth a fear, that men are true, torment you?
 Oh we are not, be not you so;
 Let me, and do you, twenty know.
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
 Must I, who came to travail⁴ through⁵ you,
 Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?
 Venus heard me sigh this song,
 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore
 She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
 She went, examined, and returned ere long.
 And said, "Alas, some two or three
 Poor heretics in love there be,
 Which think to 'stablish⁶ dangerous constancy.
 But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
 You shall be true to them who are false to you.' "

Love's Usury

For every hour that thou wilt spare me now,
 I will allow,

Usurious God of Love, twenty to thee,
 When with my brown, my gray hairs equal be;
 Till then, Love, let my body reign, and let
 Me travel, sojourn, snatch, plot, have, forget,
 Resume my last year's relic⁷: think that yet
 We'd never met.

Let me think any rival's letter mine,
 And at next nine⁸

Keep midnight's promise; mistake by the way
 The maid, and tell the lady of that delay;
 Only let me love none, no, not the sport;
 From country grass, to comfitures of Court,
 Or city's quelque-choses, let report
 My mind transport.⁹

This bargain's good: if, when I'm old, I be
 Inflamed by thee,
 If thine own honor, or my shame, or pain,
 Thou covet, most at that age thou shalt gain.

4. Handship, suffering, labor; with a pun on travel (as a verb).

5. "Through": "through."

6. Establish.

7. The woman loved and left behind last year.

8. Nine A.M.

9. Let reports about the different kinds of women—"country grass"; "comfitures" (literally, "sweet-meats"); "quelque-choses" (literally, "fancy dishes")—turn my fancy from one to the other.

Will no other vice content you?
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
 Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
 Or doth a fear, that men are true, torment you?
 Oh we are not, be not you so;
 Let me, and do you, twenty know.
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
 Must I, who came to travail⁴ through⁵ you,
 Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?
 Venus heard me sigh this song,
 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore
 She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
 She went, examined, and returned ere long.
 And said, "Alas, some two or three
 Poor heretics in love there be,
 Which think to 'stablish⁶ dangerous constancy.
 But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
 You shall be true to them who are false to you.' "

Love's Usury

For every hour that thou wilt spare me now,
 I will allow,

Usurious God of Love, twenty to thee,
 When with my brown, my gray hairs equal be;
 Till then, Love, let my body reign, and let
 Me travel, sojourn, snatch, plot, have, forget,
 Resume my last year's relic⁷: think that yet
 We'd never met.

Let me think any rival's letter mine,
 And at next nine⁸

Keep midnight's promise; mistake by the way
 The maid, and tell the lady of that delay;
 Only let me love none, no, not the sport;
 From country grass, to comfitures of Court,
 Or city's quelque-choses, let report
 My mind transport.⁹

This bargain's good: if, when I'm old, I be
 Inflamed by thee,
 If thine own honor, or my shame, or pain,
 Thou covet, most at that age thou shalt gain.

4. Handship, suffering, labor; with a pun on travel (as a verb).

5. "Through": "through."

6. Establish.

7. The woman loved and left behind last year.

8. Nine A.M.

9. Let reports about the different kinds of women—"country grass"; "comfitures" (literally, "sweet-meats"); "quelque-choses" (literally, "fancy dishes")—turn my fancy from one to the other.

Will no other vice content you?
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
 Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
 Or doth a fear, that men are true, torment you?
 Oh we are not, be not you so;
 Let me, and do you, twenty know.
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
 Must I, who came to travail⁴ through⁵ you,
 Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?
 Venus heard me sigh this song,
 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore
 She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
 She went, examined, and returned ere long.
 And said, "Alas, some two or three
 Poor heretics in love there be,
 Which think to 'stablish⁶ dangerous constancy.
 But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
 You shall be true to them who are false to you.' "

Love's Usury

For every hour that thou wilt spare me now,
 I will allow,

Usurious God of Love, twenty to thee,
 When with my brown, my gray hairs equal be;
 Till then, Love, let my body reign, and let
 Me travel, sojourn, snatch, plot, have, forget,
 Resume my last year's relic⁷: think that yet
 We'd never met.

Let me think any rival's letter mine,
 And at next nine⁸

Keep midnight's promise; mistake by the way
 The maid, and tell the lady of that delay;
 Only let me love none, no, not the sport;
 From country grass, to comfitures of Court,
 Or city's quelque-choses, let report
 My mind transport.⁹

This bargain's good: if, when I'm old, I be
 Inflamed by thee,
 If thine own honor, or my shame, or pain,
 Thou covet, most at that age thou shalt gain.

4. Handship, suffering, labor; with a pun on travel (as a verb).

5. "Through": "through."

6. Establish.

7. The woman loved and left behind last year.

8. Nine A.M.

9. Let reports about the different kinds of women—"country grass"; "comfitures" (literally, "sweet-meats"); "quelque-choses" (literally, "fancy dishes")—turn my fancy from one to the other.

Do thy will then, then subject and degree
 And fruit of love, Love, I submit to thee;
 Spare me till then, I'll bear it, though she be
 One that loves me.

The Canonization

For God's sake, hold your tongue, and let me love,
 Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
 My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
 With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
 Take you a course, get you a place,¹
 Observe his honor, or his grace,
 Or the King's real, or his stamped² face
 Contemplate; what you will, approve,³
 So you will let me love.

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
 What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
 Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
 When did my colds a forward spring remove?
 When did the heats which my veins fill
 Add one more to the plaguy bill?⁴
 Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
 Litigious men, which quarrels move,
 Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
 Call her one, me another fly,
 We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,⁵
 And we in us find the eagle and the dove.⁶
 The phoenix riddle hath more wit
 By us; we two being one, are it.
 So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
 We die and rise the same, and prove
 Mysterious by this love.⁷

We can die by it, if not live by love,
 And if unfit for tombs and hearse
 Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
 And if no piece of chronicle we prove,

1. Take a course of action, get yourself a position.
 2. Stamped on coins.
 3. Try, experience.
 4. A list of people who died of the plague.
 5. Flies or moths, symbols of the ephemeral and lustful, are attracted to and burned by candles ("tapers"), which are self-consuming. In Donne's time, to "die" was slang for consummating the sexual act, and it was believed that this act reduced one's life span.
 6. Symbols of strength and of meekness.
 7. Just as the phoenix, a unique mythological bird, is consumed by its own funeral fire, yet rises reborn from the ashes, so the lovers, made one by love, are consumed in their fire of passion but revive; "wit" means "sense," "meaning."

THE TRIPLE FOOL

We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms,⁸
 As well a well-wrought urn becomes
 The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
 And by these hymns, all shall approve
 Us canonized for Love.

And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend love
 Made one another's hermitage;
 You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
 Who did the whole world's soul extract, and drove⁹
 Into the glasses of your eyes
 (So made such mirrors, and such spies,
 That they did all to you epitomize)
 Countries, towns, courts: beg from above
 A pattern of your love!"

The Triple Fool

I am two fools, I know,
 For loving, and for saying so
 In whining poetry,
 But where's that wiseman, that would not be I,
 If she would not deny?¹
 Then, as the earth's inward narrow crooked lanes
 Do purge sea-water's fretful salt away,
 I thought, if I could draw my pains
 Through rhyme's vexation; I should them allay.
 Grief brought to numbers' cannot be so fierce,
 For he tames it that fetters it in verse.

But when I have done so,
 Some man, his art and voice to show,
 Doth set² and sing my pain,
 And, by delighting many, frees again
 Grief, which verse did restrain.
 To love and grief tribute of verse belongs,
 But not of such as pleases when 'tis read;
 Both are increased by such songs:
 For both their triumphs so are published,
 And I, which was two fools, do so grow three;
 Who are a little wise, the best fools be.

8. Donne uses "sonnets" loosely to mean "love poems"; "stanza" in Italian means "room."
 9. Grammed. "Countries, towns, courts" (line 4) are objects of the verb "drove."
 1. Verse.
 2. To music.

Lovers' Infiniteness

If yet I have not all thy love,
 Dear, I shall never have it all;
 I cannot breathe one other sigh to move,
 Nor can entreat one other tear to fall;
 And all my treasure, which should purchase thee,
 Sighs, tears, and oaths, and letters, I have spent.
 Yet no more can be due to me,
 Than at the bargain made was meant,
 If then thy gift of love were partial,
 That some to me, some should to others fall.
 Dear, I shall never have thee all.

Or if then thou gavest me all,
 All was but all which thou hadst then;
 But if in thy heart, since, there be or shall
 New love created be, by other men,
 Which have their stocks entire, and can in tears,
 In sighs, in oaths, in letters, outbid me,
 This new love may beget new fears,
 For this love was not vowed by thee.
 And yet it was, thy gift being general,
 The ground, thy heart, is mine; whatever shall
 Grow there, dear, I should have it all.

Yet I would not have all yet;
 He that hath all can have no more.
 And since my love doth every day admit
 New growth, thou shouldst have new rewards in store;
 Thou canst not every day give me thy heart;
 If thou canst give it, then thou never gavest it:
 Love's riddles are, that though thy heart depart,
 It stays at home, and thou with losing savest it:
 But we will have a way more liberal
 Than changing hearts, to join them, so we shall
 Be one, and one another's All.

Song

Sweetest love, I do not go
 For weariness of thee,
 Nor in hope the world can show
 A fitter love for me;
 But since that I
 Must die at last, 'tis best

To use myself in jest,
 Thus by feigned deaths to die.³

Yesternight the sun went hence,
 And yet is here today;
 He hath no desire nor sense,
 Nor half so short a way:
 Then fear not me,
 But believe that I shall make
 Speedier journeys, since I take
 More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power,
 That if good fortune fall,
 Cannot add another hour,
 Nor a lost hour recall!
 But come bad chance,
 And we join to it our strength,
 And we teach it art and length,
 Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,
 But sigh'st my soul away;
 When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
 My life's blood doth decay.⁴
 It cannot be

That thou lov'st me, as thou say'st,
 If in thine my life thou waste;
 Thou art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
 Forethink me any ill;
 Destiny may take thy part,
 And may thy fears fulfill;
 But think that we
 Are but turned aside to sleep;
 They who one another keep
 Alive, ne'er parted be.

The Legacy

When I died last (and, dear, I die
 As often as from thee I go),
 Though it be but an hour ago,
 And lovers' hours be full eternity,

3. To accustom myself to death by playing at it. 4. Every sigh or tear was supposed to shorten life through "feigned deaths," i.e., absences.

So thy love may be my love's sphere;⁴
 Just such disparity
 As is 'twixt air and angels' purity,
 'Twixt women's love and men's will ever be.

Break of Day⁵

'Tis true, 'tis day; what though it be?
 Oh wilt thou therefore rise from me?
 Why should we rise because 'tis light?
 Did we lie down because 'twas night?
 Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,
 Should in despite of light keep us together.

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;
 If it could speak as well as spy,
 This were the worst that it could say,
 That being well, I fain would stay,
 And that I loved my heart and honor so,
 That I would not from him, that had them, go.

Must business thee from hence remove?
 Oh, that's the worst disease of love;
 The poor, the foul, the false, love can
 Admit, but not the busied man.
 He which hath business, and makes love, doth do
 Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo.

The Anniversary

All kings, and all their favorites,
 All glory of honors, beauties, wits,
 The sun itself, which makes times,⁶ as they pass.
 Is elder by a year, now, than it was
 When thou and I first one another saw:
 All other things to their destruction draw,
 Only our love hath no decay:
 This, no tomorrow hath, not yesterday;
 Running it never runs from us away,
 But truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day.

4. Each celestial sphere was thought to be inhabited and governed by an angel.

5. The speaker of this poem is a woman. In the 1669 edition and some MSS., a stanza (in a different meter, spoken by a man, and probably not

written by Donne) precedes the three stanzas of this poem. See *Citerson's Poems of John Donne*, I, 432.
 6. Days, years; "they" probably refers to "times" rather than to "kings," "favorites," etc.

Two graves must hide thine and my corse;⁷
 If one might, death were no divorce:
 Alas, as well as other princes, we
 (Who prince enough in one another be)
 Must leave at last in death, these eyes, and ears,
 Off fed with true oaths, and with sweet salt tears;
 But souls where nothing dwells but love
 (All other thoughts being inmates⁸) then shall prove
 This, or a love increased there above,⁹
 When bodies to their graves, souls from their graves remove.

And then we shall be thoroughly¹ blest,
 But we no more than all the rest;
 Here upon earth, we're kings, and none but we
 Can be such kings, nor of such subjects be;
 Who is so safe as we, where none can do
 T'reason to us, except one of us two?²
 True and false fears let us refrain,
 Let us love nobly, and live, and add again
 Years and years unto years, till we attain
 To write threescore, this is the second of our reign.

A Valediction: Of My Name, in the Window

My name engraved herein
 Doth contribute my firmness to this glass,
 Which, ever since that charm, hath been
 As hard as that which graved it was;
 Thine eye will give it price enough to mock
 The diamonds of either rock.²

'Tis much that glass should be
 As all-confessing, and through-shine³ as I;
 'Tis more, that it shows thee to thee,
 And clear reflects thee to thine eye.
 But all such rules, love's magic can undo,
 Here you see me, and I am you.⁴

As no one point, nor dash,
 Which are but accessories to this name,
 The showers and tempests can outwash,
 So shall all times find me the same;

7. Corpse.

8. Only temporary lodgers; "prove" means "learn," "discover."

9. In heaven.

1. Thoroughly.

2. Your looking at it will give the glass (on which

the speaker has engraved his name with a diamond) a value superior to the diamonds of either India or South America.

3. Transparent.

4. Because lovers are one.

When a tear falls, that thou falls which it bore,⁴
So thou and I are nothing then, when on a diverse shore.

On a round ball
A workman that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, *All*,⁵
So doth each tear
Which thee doth wear,⁶
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,
Till thy tears mixed with mine do overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved so.

O more than Moon,
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere,
Weep me not dead, in thine arms, but forbear
To teach the sea what it may do too soon;
Let not the wind
Example find
To do me more harm than it purposeth;
Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,
Who'er sighs most is cruellest, and hastes the other's death.⁷

Love's Alchemy

Some that have deeper digged love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happiness doth lie:
I have loved, and got, and told,
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I should not find that hidden mystery;
Oh, 'tis imposture all:
And as no chemic yet the elixir got⁸
But glorifies his pregnant pot,⁹
If by the way to him befall
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
So, lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-seeming summer's night.
Our ease, our thrift, our honor, and our day,
Shall we for this vain bubble's shadow pay?
Ends love in this, that my man¹

4. The imminent separation of the lovers causes the speaker's tears, in which the woman's face is reflected; hence when a tear falls the woman's image (the "thou" that the tear bore) also falls.
5. By pasting his maps onto a blank globe ("round ball"), a mapmaker makes "that which was nothing" (the blank globe) into (a representation of) "All".
6. I.e., which bears your image.
7. Sighing was thought to shorten life.
8. As no alchemist has yet obtained the panacean elixir of life.
9. Fruitful crucible.
1. Servant.

Can be as happy as I can, if he can
Endure the short scorn of a bridegroom's play?
That loving wretch that swears
'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds,
Which he in her angelic finds,
Would swear as justly, that he hears,
In that day's rude hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres.²
Hope not for mind in women; at their best
Sweetness and wit, they're but *Mummy*, possessed.³

The Flea

Mark but this flea, and mark in this
How little that which thou deny'st 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,⁴
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, we're met
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use⁵ 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 thyself, 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.

2. In the wedding day's raucous music, the heavenly music of the celestial spheres.
3. The punctuation of lines 23-24 is uncertain. Among possible meanings: even the sweetest and whitest women are merely dead flesh possessed or animated by an evil demon; or are, when a man possesses them, merely bodies without minds.
4. *Mummy* was also a reputed panacea made from mummies.
5. Medical theory of Donne's time held that in sexual intercourse blood was literally mingled, leading to procreation. The flea symbolizes this mingling.
6. Habit.

The Apparition

When by thy scorn, O murd'ress, I am dead,
 And that thou thinkst thee free
 From all solicitation from me,
 Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
 And thee, fained vestal,⁵ in worse arms shall see;
 Then thy sick taper will begin to wink,⁷
 And he, whose thou art then, being tired before,
 Will, if thou stir, or pinch to wake him, think
 Thou call'st for more,
 And in false sleep will from thee shrink,
 And then, poor aspen⁸ wretch, neglected thou
 Bathed in a cold quicksilver sweat wilt lie,
 A verier ghost than I;
 What I will say, I will not tell thee now,
 Lest that preserve thee; and since my love is spent,
 I had rather thou should'st painfully repent,
 Than by my threatnings rest still innocent.

The Broken Heart

He is stark mad, who ever says
 That he hath been in love an hour,
 Yet not that love so soon decays,
 But that it can ten in less space devour;
 Who will believe me, if I swear
 That I have had the plague a year?
 Who would not laugh at me, if I should say
 I saw a flask of powder burn a day?
 Ah, what a trifle is a heart,
 If once into love's hands it come!
 All other griefs allow a part
 To other griefs, and ask themselves but some;
 They come to us, but us Love draws,
 He swallows us, and never chaws:⁹
 By him, as by chained shot, whole ranks do die;
 He is the tyrant pike, our hearts the fry.¹
 If 'twere not so, what did become
 Of my heart, when I first saw thee?
 I brought a heart into the room,
 But from the room I carried none with me;
 If it had gone to thee, I know

6. Willing, eager (with a pun on "feigned") vir-
 gin.

7. Flicker.

8. Figuratively, tremulous; timorous.

9. Chews.

1. Small fish (which the pike devours).

Mine would have taught thine heart to show
 More pity unto me: but Love, alas,
 At one first blow did shiver it as glass.

Yet nothing can to nothing fall,
 Nor any place be empty quite,
 Therefore I think my breast hath all
 Those pieces still, though they be not unite;
 And now, as broken glasses² show
 A hundred lesser faces, so
 My rags of heart can like, wish, and adore,
 But after one such love, can love no more.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning³

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 the earth⁴ brings harms and fears,
 Men reckon what it did and meant;
 But trepidation of the spheres,
 Though greater far, is innocent.⁵

Dull sublunary⁶ lovers' love
 (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
 Absence, because it doth remove
 Those things which elemented⁷ 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.

2. Mirrors.
 3. Isaac Walton says that Donne wrote this poem
 for his wife before he left for France in 1611.
 4. Earthquakes.
 5. The oscillatory movement of the celestial
 spheres, though far greater than earthquakes, "is
 innocent," i.e., causes no "harms and fears."
 6. Under the moon, and thus earthly and change-
 able.
 7. Composed

On man heaven's influence works not so,
But that it first imprints the air;⁷
So soul into the soul may flow,
Though it to body first repair.

As our blood labors to beget
Spirits⁸ as like souls as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtle knot which makes us man:

So must pure lovers' souls descend
To affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great Prince in prison lies.

To our bodies turn we then, that so
Weak men on love revealed may look;
Love's mysteries in souls do grow,
But yet the body is his book.

And if some lover, such as we,
Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still mark us, he shall see
Small change, when we're to bodies gone.

Love's Deity

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,
Who died before the god of love was born:
I cannot think that he who then loved most
Sunk so low as to love one which did scorn.
But since this god produced a destiny,
And that vice-nature,⁹ custom, lets it be,
I must love her that loves not me.

Sure, they which made him god meant not so much,
Nor he, in his young godhead, practised it.
But when an even flame two hearts did touch,
His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives.¹ Correspondency
Only his subject was; it cannot be
Love, till I love her that loves me.

7. Astrology held that the stars influenced man through their effect on the air.

8. Vapors produced by the blood and forming a link between body and soul.

9. Substitute for nature.

1. To join male lovers to corresponding female lovers.

LOVE'S DIET

But every modern god will² now extend
His vast prerogative, as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
All is the purlieu of the god of love.

Oh were we wakened by this tyranny
To ungod this child again, it could not be
I should love her who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
As though I felt the worst that love could do?
Love might make me leave loving, or might try
A deeper plague, to make her love me too,
Which, since she loves before,³ I'm loth to see;
Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must be,
If she whom I love should love me.

Love's Diet

To what a cumbersome unwieldiness
And burdensome corpulence my love had grown,
But that I did, to make it less,
And keep it in proportion,
Give it a diet, made it feed upon
That which love worst endures, *discretion*.

Above one sigh a day I allowed him not,
Of which my fortune and my faults had part;⁴
And if sometimes by stealth he got
A she-sigh from my mistress' heart,
And thought to feast on that, I let him see
'Twas neither very sound, nor meant to me.⁵

If he wrung from me a tear, I brined⁶ it so
With scorn or shame, that him it nourished not;
If he sucked hers, I let him know
'Twas not a tear which he had got,
His drink was counterfeit, as was his meat;⁷
For eyes which roll towards all, weep not, but sweat.

Whatever he would dictate, I writ that,
But burnt my letters; when she writ to me,
And that that favor made him fat,⁸
I said, if any title be

2. Wants to.

3. Already loves someone else.

4. And a part of that sigh was owing to my own bad fortune and faults.

5. Neither genuine nor meant for me.

6. Salted.

7. I.e., his sighs.

8. When she wrote to me, and wrote (understood repetition of the preceding verb) that that favor (of writing) made love grow. (See J. V. Heagopian, *Explicator* XVII:5)

The Expiration⁸

So, so, break off this last lamenting kiss,
Which sucks two souls, and vapors both away;⁹
Turn thou, ghost, that way, and let me turn this,
And let ourselves beight our happiest day;
We asked none leave to love; nor will we owe
Any so cheap a death as saying, "Go";

"Go"; and if that word have not quite killed thee,
Ease me with death by bidding me go too.
Or, if it have, let my word work on me,
And a just office on a murderer do,
Except¹ it be too late to kill me so,
Being double dead, going, and bidding go.

The Computation

For the first twenty years, since yesterday,
I scarce believed thou couldst be gone away;
For forty more, I fed on favors past,
And forty on hopes, that thou wouldst they might last.
Tears drowned one hundred, and sighs blew out two;
A thousand, I did neither think, nor do,
Or not divide, all being one thought of you;
Or, in a thousand more, forgot that too.
Yet call not this long life; but think that I
Am, by being dead, immortal; can ghosts die?

The Paradox

No lover saith, "I love," nor any other
Can judge a perfect lover;
He thinks that else none can, nor will agree
That any loves but he:
I cannot say I loved, for who can say
He was killed yesterday?²
Love with excess of heat, more young, than old,
Death kills with too much cold;
We die but once, and who loved last did die,
He that saith twice, doth lie:
For though he seem to move, and stir a while,
It doth the sense beguile.

8. Entitled "Valdickon" in some manuscripts.

9. Causes both to pass away in the form of a vapor.

1. Unless.

Such life is like the light which bideth yet
When the light's life³ is set,
Or like the heat, which fire in solid matter
Leaves behind, two hours after.
Once I loved and died; and am now become
Mine epitaph and tomb.
Here dead men speak their last, and so do I:
Love-slain, lo, here I lie.⁴

Farewell to Love

Whilst yet to prove,⁵
I thought there was some deity in love,
So did I reverence, and gave
Worship; as atheists at their dying hour
Call, what they cannot name, an unknown power,
As ignorantly did I crave:
Thus when

Things not yet known are coveted by men,
Our desires give them fashion,⁶ and so
As they wax lesser, fall, as they size,⁷ grow.

But, from late fair
High Highness sitting in a golden chair⁸
Is not less cared for after three days
By children, than the thing which lovers so
Blindly admire, and with such worship woo;
Being had, enjoying it decays:
And thence,

What before pleased them all, takes but one sense,⁹
And that so lamely, as it leaves behind
A kind of sorrowing dullness to the mind.

Ah, cannot we,
As well as cocks and lions, jocular be
After such pleasures? Unless wise
Nature decreed (since each such act, they say,
Diminisheth the length of life a day)

This; as she would man should despise
The sport,
Because that other curse of being short,
And only for a minute made to be
Eagers desires to raise posterity.¹

3. Sun.

4. I. e., lie prone, dead, and tell a lie.

5. While still inexperienced.

6. Form.

7. Subside, as they increase.

8. I. e., a boy bought at a recent fair.

9. What before pleased all the senses, now pleases only one sense.

1. Various emendations and interpretations have been suggested for these most difficult lines. Sir Herbert Grierson originally emended "Eager, desires" to "Eagers desire". K. T. Emerson sug-

To God, in His stern wrath why threatens He?
 But who am I that dare dispute with Thee?
 O God, oh! of thine only worthy blood,
 And my tears, make a heavenly Lethæan⁷ flood,
 And drown in it my sin's black memory.
 That Thou remember them,⁸ some claim as debt,
 I think it mercy, if Thou wilt forget.

6 (X)

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.⁹
 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.

7 (XI)

Spit in my face you Jews, and pierce my side,
 Buffet, and scoff, scourge, and crucify me,
 For I have sinned, and sinned, and only He
 Who could do no iniquity hath died:
 But by my death cannot be satisfied?²
 My sins, which pass the Jews' impiety:
 They killed once an inglorious man, but I
 Crucify him daily, being now glorified.
 Oh let me then His strange love still admire:
 Kings pardon, but He bore our punishment.
 And Jacob came clothed in vile harsh attire
 But to supplant, and with gainful intent,³
 God clothed himself in vile man's flesh that so
 He might be weak enough to suffer woe.

7. Inducing forgetfulness.

8. In order to pardon them.

9. Rescue, deliverance; also, the bringing forth or "birth" of the soul.

1. Puff up with pride.

2. Atoned for.

3. By disguising himself as his older brother, Jacob gained his father's blessing (Genesis 27).

8 (XII)

Why are we by all creatures waited on?
 Why do the prodigal elements supply
 Life and food to me, being more pure than I,
 Simple, and further from corruption?⁴
 Why brook'st thou, ignorant horse, subjection?
 Why dost thou, bull and boar, so sillily
 Dissemble weakness, and by one man's stroke die,
 Whose whole kind you might swallow and feed upon?
 Weaker I am, woe is me, and worse than you,
 You have not sinned, nor need be timorous.
 But wonder at a greater wonder, for to us
 Created nature doth these things subdue,
 But their Creator, whom sin nor nature tied,
 For us, His creatures, and his foes, hath died.

9 (XIII)

What if this present were the world's last night?
 Mark in my heart, O soul, where thou dost dwell,
 The picture of Christ crucified, and tell
 Whether that countenance can thee affright,
 Tears in His eyes quench the amazing light,
 Blood fills His frowns, which from His pierced head fell.
 And can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell,
 Which prayed forgiveness for His foes' fierce spite?
 No, no; but as in my idolatry
 I said to all my profane mistresses,
 Beauty, of pity, foulness only is
 A sign of rigor:⁵ so I say to thee,
 To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assigned,
 This beautiful form assures a piteous mind.

10 (XIV)

Batter my heart, three-personed 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 usurped town, to another due,
 Labor to admit You, but Oh, to no end!
 Reason, Your viceroy in me, me should defend,

4. Being uncompounded, and thus less subject to decay.
 5. Beauty is a sign of pity; ugliness is a sign of strictness, harshness.

Nor Thou nor Thy religion dost control³
 The amorousness of an harmonious soul,
 But Thou would'st have that love Thyself; as Thou
 Art jealous, Lord, so I am jealous now;
 Thou lov'st not, till from loving more, Thou free
 My soul: whoever gives, takes liberty:
 O, if Thou car'st not whom I love,
 Alas, Thou lov'st not me.

Seal then this bill of my divorce to all
 On whom those fainter beams of love did fall;
 Marry those loves which in youth scattered be
 On fame, wit, hopes (false mistresses) to Thee.
 Churches are best for prayer that have least light:
 To see God only, I go out of sight;
 And to 'scape stormy days, I choose
 An everlasting night.

Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness⁴

Since I am coming to that holy room
 Where, with Thy choir of saints forevermore,
 I shall be made Thy Music, as I come
 I tune the instrument here at the door,
 And what I must do then, think now before.

Whilst my physicians by their love are grown
 Cosmographers, and I their map,⁵ who lie
 Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown
 That this is my South-west discovery
Per fretum febris, by these straits to die,⁶

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;
 For, though their current yield return to none,
 What shall my West hurt me? As West and East?
 In all flat maps (and I am one) are one,
 So death doth touch the resurrection.

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or are
 The Eastern riches? Is *Jerusalem*?
Anyan,⁸ and *Magellan*, and *Gibraltar*,

3. Censure.
 4. Izaak Walton dated this poem eight days before Donne's death on March 31, 1631, but there is other evidence that the poem may have been written during Donne's illness in 1623.
 5. It was believed that every man was a "little world."
 6. As Magellan made a southwest journey through the Straits of Magellan (and later died in the Philippines), so Donne will make his last journey "through the straits of fever" (*per fretum febris*); south connotes heat, and west, where the sun sets, connotes death.
 7. The east, where the sun (Son) rises, connotes life, rebirth.
 8. Bering Strait

All straits, and none but straits, are ways to them,
 Whether where *Japhet* dwelt, or *Cham*, or *Shem*.⁹

We think that *Paradise* and *Calvary*,
Christ's Cross, and *Adam's* tree, stood in one place;
 Look, Lord, and find both *Adams* met in me;
 As the first *Adam's* sweat surrounds my face,
 May the last *Adam's*¹ blood my soul embrace.

So, in His purple² wrapped, receive me, Lord,
 By these His thorns give me His other crown;
 And as to others' souls I preached Thy word,
 Be this my text, my sermon to mine own,
 Therefore that He may raise, the Lord throws down.

1635

A Hymn to God the Father³

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
 Which is my sin, though it were done before?
 Wilt Thou forgive those sins through which I run,
 And do them still, though still I do deplore?
 When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done,
 For I have more.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin by which I have won
 Others to sin? and made my sin their door?
 Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
 A year or two, but wallowed in a score?
 When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done,
 For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
 My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
 Swear by Thyself that at my death Thy Sun
 Shall shine as it shines now, and heretofore;
 And, having done that, Thou hast done,
 I have no more.

9. Noah's sons, whose descendants were said to inhabit, respectively, Europe, Africa, Asia
 1. Christ's.
 2. Christ's blood; also, the color of royal robes and of the garments the soldiers put on Christ (Mark 15:17).
 3. Donne puns on his name throughout this poem, which Walton says Donne wrote in his illness of 1623.

Nor Thou nor Thy religion dost control³
 The amorousness of an harmonious soul,
 But Thou would'st have that love Thyself; as Thou
 Art jealous, Lord, so I am jealous now;
 Thou lov'st not, till from loving more, Thou free
 My soul: whoever gives, takes liberty:
 O, if Thou car'st not whom I love,
 Alas, Thou lov'st not me.

Seal then this bill of my divorce to all
 On whom those fainter beams of love did fall;
 Marry those loves which in youth scattered be
 On fame, wit, hopes (false mistresses) to Thee.
 Churches are best for prayer that have least light:
 To see God only, I go out of sight;
 And to 'scape stormy days, I choose
 An everlasting night.

Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness⁴

Since I am coming to that holy room
 Where, with Thy choir of saints forevermore,
 I shall be made Thy Music, as I come
 I tune the instrument here at the door,
 And what I must do then, think now before.

Whilst my physicians by their love are grown
 Cosmographers, and I their map,⁵ who lie
 Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown
 That this is my South-west discovery
Per fretum febris, by these straits to die,⁶

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;
 For, though their current yield return to none,
 What shall my West hurt me? As West and East?
 In all flat maps (and I am one) are one,
 So death doth touch the resurrection.

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or are
 The Eastern riches? Is *Jerusalem*?
Anyan,⁸ and *Magellan*, and *Gibraltar*,

3. Censure.
 4. Izaak Walton dated this poem eight days before Donne's death on March 31, 1631, but there is other evidence that the poem may have been written during Donne's illness in 1623.
 5. It was believed that every man was a "little world."
 6. As Magellan made a southwest journey through the Straits of Magellan (and later died in the Philippines), so Donne will make his last journey "through the straits of fever" (*per fretum febris*); south connotes heat, and west, where the sun sets, connotes death.
 7. The east, where the sun (Son) rises, connotes life, rebirth.
 8. Bering Strait

This is love's timber, youth his underwood;²
 There he, as wine in June, enrages blood,
 Which then comes seasonablist, when our taste
 And appetite to other things is past.
 Xerxes' strange Lydian love, the platane tree,³
 Was loved for age, none being so large as she,
 Or else because, being young, nature did bless
 Her youth with age's glory, barrenness.
 If we love things long sought, age is a thing
 Which we are fifty years in compassing;
 If transitory things, which soon decay,
 Age must be loveliest at the latest day.
 But name not winter-faces, whose skin's slack,
 Lank, as an unthriff's purse, but a soul's sack;
 Whose eyes seek light within, for all here's shade;
 Whose mouths are holes, rather worn out, than made;
 Whose every tooth to a several place is gone,
 To vex their souls at Resurrection;⁴
 Name not these living death's-heads unto me,
 For these not ancient, but antique be.
 I hate extremes; yet I had rather stay
 With tombs than cradles, to wear out a day.
 Since such love's natural lation⁵ is, may still
 My love descend and journey down the hill,
 Not panting after growing beauties, so,
 I shall ebb on with them who homeward go.

Elegy X. The Dream⁶

Image⁷ of her (whom I love, more than she,⁸
 Whose fair impression in my faithful heart
 Makes me her medal, and makes her love me
 As Kings do coins to which their stamps impart
 The value) go, and take my heart from hence,
 Honors oppress weak spirits, and our sense
 Strong objects dull; the more, the less we see.
 When you are gone, and reason gone with you,
 Then fantasy⁹ is queen, and soul, and all;
 She can present joys meaner than you do,

2. Undergrowth.
 3. On his march to Greece, Xerxes honored a plane tree in Lydia, decking it with gold and appointing a guard.
 4. At the Resurrection, when the body is to rejoin the soul, all of the parts of the body, even though they may be in different places, must be recovered.
 5. Mobion.
 6. Unlike Donne's other elegies, this poem, the title of which is from the 1635 edition, is not written in rhymed couplets. Some MSS. include it among the Songs and Sonnets.
 7. Probably a "mental picture," which the speaker speaks of as being in his heart.
 8. More than she loves it (the image). (The argument for so construing this disputed line is made by E. Schwartz in *Explicator* 19:67.)
 9. Imagination or fancy.

Convenient, and more proportional.
 So, if I dream I have you, I have you,
 For all our joys are but fantastical.¹
 And so I scape the pain, for pain is true;
 And sleep, which locks up sense, doth lock out all.
 After a such fruition I shall wake,
 And, but the waking, nothing shall repent;
 And shall to love more thankful sonnets make
 Than if more honor, tears, and pains were spent.
 But dearest heart, and dearer image, stay;
 Alas, true joys at best are dream enough;
 Though you stay here you pass too fast away,
 For even at first life's taper is a snuff.²
 Filled with her love, may I be rather grown
 Mad with much heart than idiot with none.

Elegy XI. The Bracelet

Upon the loss of his Mistress' Chain, for which he made
 satisfaction
 Not that in color it was like thy hair,
 For armlets of that thou mayst let me wear:
 Nor that thy hand it oft embraced and kissed,
 For so it had that good, which oft I missed:
 Nor for that silly old morality,³
 That as these links were knit, our love should be:
 Mourm I that I thy sevenfold chain have lost;
 Nor for the luck sake, but the bitter cost.
 Oh, shall twelve righteous angels,⁴ which as yet
 No leaven of vile soulder did admit;
 Nor yet by any fault have strayed or gone
 From the first state of their creation;
 Angels, which heaven commanded to provide
 All things to me, and be my faithful guide,
 To gain new friends, to appease great enemies,
 To comfort my soul, when I lie or rise;
 Shall these twelve innocents, by thy severe
 Sentence (dread judge) my sin's great burden bear?
 Shall they be damned, and in the furnace thrown?
 And punished for offences not their own?
 They save not me, they do not ease my pains,
 When in that hell they're burnt and tied in chains.

1. Products of "angel": (1) spirits; (2) English gold coin.
 2. Candle end.
 3. Inscription.
 4. Throughout the poem, Donne plays on two

HOLY SONNETS¹

(1633)

1 (II)

As due by many titles I resign
 Myself to Thee, O God, first I was made
 By Thee, and for Thee, and when I was decayed
 Thy blood bought that the which before was Thine;
 I am Thy son, made with Thyself to shine,
 Thy servant, whose pains thou hast still repaid,
 Thy sheep, Thine Image, and, till I betrayed
 Myself, a temple of Thy Spirit divine;
 Why doth the devil then usurp on² me?
 Why doth he steal, nay ravish that's Thy right?
 Except Thou rise and for Thine own work fight,
 Oh I shall soon despair, when I do see
 That Thou lov'st mankind well, yet wilt not choose me,
 And Satan hates me, yet is loath to lose me.

2 (IV)

Oh my black soul! now thou art summoned
 By sickness, death's herald, and champion;
 Thou art like a pilgrim, which abroad hath done
 Treason, and durst not turn to whence he is fled,
 Or like a thief, which till death's doom be read,
 Wisheth himself delivered from prison;
 But damned and haled to execution,
 Wisheth that still he might be imprisoned.
 Yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lack;
 But who shall give thee that grace to begin?
 Oh make thyself with holy mourning black,
 And red with blushing, as thou art with sin;
 Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might
 That being red,³ it dyes red souls to white.

1. The numbering (in Roman numerals) of the Holy Sonnets in the 1633 to 1669 editions and in Sir Herbert Grierson's edition has been retained in parentheses; for the critics have usually referred to the Holy Sonnets by means of these Roman numerals; but the sequence suggested by Helen Gardner in her edition of *The Divine Poems* has been adopted and her renumbering followed. If the

sonnets are separate ejaculations, as Grierson thought, the order in which they are printed is not of consequence; however, if they in fact form a sequence, that fact will more readily become apparent by studying them in the proper sequence.
 2. Claim unjustly, appropriate wrongfully.
 3. With a pun on "read" (understood); red, as applied to man's soul, is the color of sin.

3 (VI)

This is my play's last scene, here heavens appoint
 My pilgrimage's last mile; and my race,
 Idly yet quickly run, hath this last pace,
 My span's last inch, my minute's last point,
 And gluttonous death will instantly unjoint
 My body and soul, and I shall sleep a space,
 But my ever-waking part shall see that face
 Whose fear⁴ already shakes my every joint.
 Then, as my soul to heaven, her first seat, takes flight,
 And earth-born body in the earth shall dwell,
 So, fall my sins, that all may have their right,
 To where they're bred, and would press me, to hell.
 Impute me righteous, thus purged of evil,
 For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devil.

4 (VII)

At the round earth's imagined corners,⁵ blow
 Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
 From death, you numberless infinities
 Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go,
 All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
 All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
 Despair, law, chance, hath slain, and you whose eyes
 Shall behold God and never taste death's woe.⁶
 But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space,
 For if above all these my sins abound,
 'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace
 When we are there; here on this lowly ground,
 Teach me how to repent; for that's as good
 As if Thou hadst sealed my pardon with Thy blood.

5 (IX)

If poisonous minerals, and if that tree
 Whose fruit threw death on else immortal us,
 If lecherous goats, if serpents envious
 Cannot be damned, alas, why should I be?
 Why should intent or reason, born in me,
 Make sins, else equal, in me more heinous?
 And mercy being easy, and glorious

4. The fear of whom

5. " . . . I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth." (Revelation 7.1)

6. " . . . there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." (Luke 9.27); see also I Corinthians 15.51-57.

To God, in His stern wrath why threatens He?
 But who am I that dare dispute with Thee?
 O God, oh! of thine only worthy blood,
 And my tears, make a heavenly Lethæan⁷ flood,
 And drown in it my sin's black memory.
 That Thou remember them,⁸ some claim as debt,
 I think it mercy, if Thou wilt forget.

6 (X)

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.

7 (XI)

Spit in my face you Jews, and pierce my side,
 Buffet, and scoff, scourge, and crucify me,
 For I have sinned, and sinned, and only He
 Who could do no iniquity hath died:
 But by my death cannot be satisfied?⁷
 My sins, which pass the Jews' impiety:
 They killed once an inglorious man, but I
 Crucify him daily, being now glorified.
 Oh let me then His strange love still admire:
 Kings pardon, but He bore our punishment.
 And Jacob came clothed in vile harsh attire
 But to supplant, and with gainful intent,⁸
 God clothed himself in vile man's flesh that so
 He might be weak enough to suffer woe.

7. Inducing forgetfulness.

8. In order to pardon them.

9. Rescue, deliverance; also, the bringing forth or "birth" of the soul.

1. Puff up with pride.

2. Atoned for.

3. By disguising himself as his older brother, Jacob gained his father's blessing (Genesis 27).

8 (XII)

Why are we by all creatures waited on?
 Why do the prodigal elements supply
 Life and food to me, being more pure than I,
 Simple, and further from corruption?⁴
 Why brook'st thou, ignorant horse, subjection?
 Why dost thou, bull and boar, so sillily
 Dissemble weakness, and by one man's stroke die,
 Whose whole kind you might swallow and feed upon?
 Weaker I am, woe is me, and worse than you,
 You have not sinned, nor need be timorous.
 But wonder at a greater wonder, for to us
 Created nature doth these things subdue,
 But their Creator, whom sin nor nature tied,
 For us, His creatures, and his foes, hath died.

9 (XIII)

What if this present were the world's last night?
 Mark in my heart, O soul, where thou dost dwell,
 The picture of Christ crucified, and tell
 Whether that countenance can thee affright,
 Tears in His eyes quench the amazing light,
 Blood fills His frowns, which from His pierced head fell.
 And can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell,
 Which prayed forgiveness for His foes' fierce spite?
 No, no; but as in my idolatry
 I said to all my profane mistresses,
 Beauty, of pity, foulness only is
 A sign of rigor:⁵ so I say to thee,
 To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assigned,
 This beauteous form assures a piteous mind.

10 (XIV)

Batter my heart, three-personed 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 usurped town, to another due,
 Labor to admit You, but Oh, to no end!
 Reason, Your viceroy in me, me should defend,

4. Being uncompounded, and thus less subject to decay.

5. Beauty is a sign of pity; ugliness is a sign of strictness, harshness.

But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
 Yet dearly I love You, and would be loved fain,
 But am betrothed 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.

11 (XV)

Wilt thou love God, as He thee? then digest,
 My soul, this wholesome meditation,
 How God the Spirit, by angels waited on
 In heaven, doth make His Temple in thy breast.⁶
 The Father, having begot a Son most blest,
 And still begetting (for he ne'er begun),
 Hath deigned to choose thee, by adoption,
 Coheir to His glory and sabbath's endless rest;
 And as a robbed man which by search doth find
 His stol'n stuff sold must lose or buy it again,
 The Son of glory came down, and was slain,
 Us whom He had made, and Satan stol'n,⁷ to unbind.
 'Twas much that man was made like God before,
 But that God should be made like man, much more.

12 (XVI)

Father, part of His double interest
 Unto Thy kingdom, Thy Son gives to me;
 His jointure in the knotty Trinity⁸
 He keeps, and gives to me His death's conquest.
 This Lamb, whose death with life the world hath blest,
 Was from the world's beginning slain, and He
 Hath made two wills,⁹ which with the legacy
 Of His and Thy kingdom do Thy Sons invest.
 Yet such are those laws that men argue yet
 Whether a man those statutes can fulfill;
 None doth; but all-healing grace and Spirit
 Revive again what law and letter kill.¹
 Thy law's abridgment and Thy last command
 Is all but love;² oh let that last will stand!

6. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

7. And whom Satan had stolen.

8. "Jointure": "the holding of an estate by two or more persons in joint-tenancy"; "knotty": "hard to explain" as well as, perhaps, "closely or intricately tied together."

9. I.e., the Old and New Testaments.

1. "... the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Corinthians 3:6).

2. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12).

HOLY SONNETS

(added in 1635)

1 (I)

Thou hast made me, and shall Thy work decay?
 Repair me now, for now mine end doth haste,
 I run to death, and death meets me as fast,
 And all my pleasures are like yesterday;
 I dare not move my dim eyes any way,
 Despair behind and death before doth cast
 Such terror, and my feebled flesh doth waste
 By sin in it, which it towards hell doth weigh;
 Only Thou art above, and when towards Thee
 By Thy leave I can look, I rise again;
 But our old subtle foe so tempteth me
 That not one hour myself I can sustain;
 Thy grace may wing me to prevent¹ his art,
 And thou like adamant² draw mine iron heart.

1635

2 (V)

I am a little world made cunningly
 Of elements and an angelic sprite.
 But black sin hath betrayed to endless night
 My world's both parts, and, oh, both parts must die.
 You which beyond that heaven which was most high
 Have found new spheres, and of new lands can write,³
 Pour new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
 Drown my world with my weeping earnestly,
 Or wash it if it must be drowned no more.⁴
 But oh it must be burnt!⁵ Alas, the fire
 Of lust and envy have burnt it heretofore,
 And made it fouler; let their flames retire,
 And burn me, O Lord, with a fiery zeal
 Of Thee and Thy house, which doth in eating heal.⁶

1635

1. Strengthen me to frustrate.

2. A magnet.

3. Donne addresses the astronomers and explorers who had made new discoveries.

4. After the Flood, God promised Noah that "neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the

earth." (Genesis 9:11).

5. By the fire that, it was believed, would end the world.

6. "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (Psalms 69:9).