

Andrew Marvell (1621–1678)

To His Coy Mistress 1681

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
Til 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 wingéd 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 honor 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.

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20

30

39

slow-jawed

Let us roll our strength and all
 Our sweetness up into one ball,
 And tear our pleasures with rough strife
 Thorough^o the iron gates of life:
 Thus, though we cannot make our sun
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.

through

For Analysis

1. State the argument of the poem (see ll. 1–2, 21–22, 33–34).
2. Compare the figures of speech in lines 1–20 with those in lines 33–46. How do they differ?
3. Describe the attitude toward life recommended by the poet.

Writing Topic

In what ways does the concept of love in this poem differ from that in John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (p. 790)? In your discussion, consider the imagery in both poems.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762)

Song (1739?)

Why should you think I live unpleas'd,
 Because I am not pleas'd with you?
 My mind is not so far diseas'd,
 To yield when powder'd fops pursue.

My vanity can find no charm
 In common prostituted vows;
 Nor can you raise a wish that's warm
 In one that your true value knows.

While cold and careless thus I shun
 The buzz and flutter that you make,
 Perhaps some giddy girl may run
 To catch the prize that I forsake.

So brightly shines the glittering glare,
 In unexperienc'd children's eyes,
 When they with little arts ensnare
 The gaudy painted butterflies.