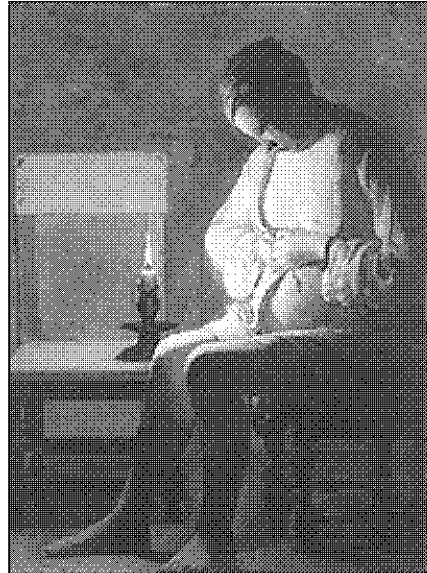


THE FLEA.
by John Donne

MARK but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is ;
It suck'd 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 pamper'd swells with one blood made of two ;
And this, alas ! is more than we would do.

O 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 cloister'd 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 suck'd 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 honour, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.



Woman Catching Fleas. c. 1630.
Georges de la Tour.
Musée Historique, Nancy

Source:
Donne, John. *Poems of John Donne*. vol I.
E. K. Chambers, ed.
London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896. 1-2.

THE ECSTACY.
by John Donne

WHERE, like a pillow on a bed,
A pregnant bank swell'd up, to rest
The violet's reclining head,
Sat we two, one another's best.

Our hands were firmly cemented
By a fast balm, which thence did spring ;
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string.

So to engraft our hands, as yet
Was all the means to make us one ;
And pictures in our eyes to get
Was all our propagation.

As, 'twixt two equal armies, Fate
Suspends uncertain victory,
Our souls—which to advance their state,
Were gone out—hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
We like sepulchral statues lay ;
All day, the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day.

If any, so by love refined,
That he soul's language understood,
And by good love were grown all mind,
Within convenient distance stood,

He—though he knew not which soul spake,
Because both meant, both spake the same—
Might thence a new concoction take,
And part far purer than he came.

This ecstasy doth unperplex
(We said) and tell us what we love ;
We see by this, it was not sex ;
We see, we saw not, what did move :

But as all several souls contain
Mixture of things they know not what,
Love these mix'd souls doth mix again,



Harmen Steenwijk. *Vanitas*. c.1640.
From Web Gallery of Art

And makes both one, each this, and that.

A single violet transplant,
The strength, the colour, and the size—
All which before was poor and scant—
Redoubles still, and multiplies.

When love with one another so
Interanimates two souls,
That abler soul, which thence doth flow,
Defects of loneliness controls.

We then, who are this new soul, know,
Of what we are composed, and made,
For th' atomies of which we grow
Are souls, whom no change can invade.

But, O alas ! so long, so far,
Our bodies why do we forbear?
They are ours, though not we ; we are
Th' intelligences, they the spheres.

We owe them thanks, because they thus
Did us, to us, at first convey,
Yielded their senses' force to us,
Nor are dross to us, but allay.

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

As our blood labours to beget
Spirits, 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 reveal'd 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.

Source:
Donne, John. Poems of John Donne. vol I.
E. K. Chambers, ed.
London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896. 53-56.

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,
"Now his breath goes," and some say, "No." ^[1]

So let us melt, and make no noise, 5
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 ; 10
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
Of absence, 'cause it doth remove 15
The thing which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assurèd of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss. 20

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to aery thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so 25
 As stiff twin compasses are two ;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
 Yet, when the other far doth roam, 30
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, 35
 And makes me end where I begun.

[AJ Notes:

[1] Chambers' edition copies this line as printed in the 1669 edition of Poems:
"Now his breath goes"; see the Digital Donne.
The 1633 and 1635 editions, as most of the manuscript editions, print instead:
"The breath goes now"; see the Digital Donne.]

Source:
Donne, John. Poems of John Donne. vol I.
E. K. Chambers, ed.
London, Lawrence & Bullen, 1896. 51-52.

THE DEFINITION OF LOVE.

by Andrew Marvell

I.

MY Love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis, for object, strange and high ;
It was begotten by Despair,
Upon Impossibility.

II.

Magnanimous Despair alone
Could show me so divine a thing,
Where feeble hope could ne'er have flown,
But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

III.

And yet I quickly might arrive
Where my extended soul is fixed ;
But Fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

IV.

For Fate with jealous eye does see
Two perfect loves, nor lets them close ;
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic power depose.

V.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have placed,
(Though Love's whole world on us doth wheel),
Not by themselves to be embraced,

VI.

Unless the giddy heaven fall,
And earth some new convulsion tear.
And, us to join, the world should all
Be cramp'd into a planisphere.

VII.

As lines, so love's oblique, may well
Themselves in every angle greet :
But ours, so truly parallel,
Though infinite, can never meet.

VIII.

Therefore the love which us doth bind,

But Fate so enviously debars,
Is the conjunction of the mind,
And opposition of the stars.

Source:
Marvell, Andrew. *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*.
G. A. Aitken, Ed. London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1892. 73-74.

THE NIGHT.

JOHN, CAP. 3. VER. 2.

by Henry Vaughan

THROUGH that pure virgin shrine,
That sacred veil drawn o'er Thy glorious noon,
That men might look and live, as glow-worms shine,
And face the moon :
Wise Nicodemus saw such light
As made him know his God by night.

Most blest believer he !
Who in that land of darkness and blind eyes
Thy long-expected healing wings could see
When Thou didst rise !
And, what can never more be done,
Did at midnight speak with the Sun !

O who will tell me, where
He found Thee at that dead and silent hour ?
What hallow'd solitary ground did bear
So rare a flower ;
Within whose sacred leaves did lie
The fulness of the Deity ?

No mercy-seat of gold,
No dead and dusty cherub, nor carv'd stone,
But His own living works did my Lord hold
And lodge alone ;
Where trees and herbs did watch and peep

And wonder, while the Jews did sleep.

Dear Night ! this world's defeat ;
The stop to busy fools ; cares check and curb ;
The day of spirits ; my soul's calm retreat
Which none disturb !
Christ's* progress, and His prayer-time ;
The hours to which high Heaven doth chime.

God's silent, searching flight ;
When my Lord's head is fill'd with dew, and all
His locks are wet with the clear drops of night ;
His still, soft call ;
His knocking-time ; the soul's dumb watch,
When spirits their fair kindred catch.

Were all my loud, evil days
Calm and unhaunted as is thy dark tent,
Whose peace but by some angel's wing or voice
Is seldom rent ;
Then I in Heaven all the long year
Would keep, and never wander here.

But living where the sun
Doth all things wake, and where all mix and tire
Themselves and others, I consent and run
To ev'ry mire ;
And by this world's ill-guiding light,
Err more than I can do by night.

There is in God—some say—
A deep, but dazzling darkness ; as men here
Say it is late and dusky, because they
See not all clear.
O for that Night ! where I in Him
Might live invisible and dim !

* St. Mark, cap. I, ver. 35. St. Luke, cap. 21, ver. 37.

Source:

Vaughan, Henry. The Poems of Henry Vaughan, Silurist. vol I.
E. K. Chambers, Ed. London, Lawrence & Bullen Ltd., 1896. 251-253.

Abraham Cowley



Gerrit van Honthorst. *Samson and Delilah*.
c1615. Cleveland Museum of Art.

from "The Mistress"

THE USURPATION.

Thou 'adst to my soul no title or pretence;
I was mine own, and free,
Till I had given myself to thee;
But thou hast kept me slave and prisoner since.
Well, since so insolent thou 'rt grown,
Fond tyrant! I'll depose thee from thy throne;
Such outrages must not admitted be
In an elective monarchy.

Part of my heart by gift did to thee fall;
My country, kindred, and my best
Acquaintance, were to share the rest;
But thou, their covetous neighbour, drav'st out all:
Nay more; thou mak'st me worship thee,
And wouldst the rule of my religion be:
Did ever tyrant claim such power as you,
To be both emperor and pope too?

The public miseries, and my private fate,
 Deserve some tears; but greedy thou
 (Insatiate maid!) wilt not allow
That I one drop from thee should alienate:
 Nor wilt thou grant my sins a part,
Though the sole cause of most of them thou art;
Counting my tears thy tribute and thy due,
 Since first mine eyes I gave to you.

Thou all my joys and all my hopes dost claim;
 Thou ragest like a fire in me,
 Converting all things into thee;
Nought can resist, or not encrease the flame:
 Nay, every grief and every fear
Thou dost devour, unless thy stamp it bear:
Thy presence, like the crowned basilisk's breath,
 All other serpents puts to death.

As men in hell are from diseases free,
 So from all other illls am I;
 Free from their known formality:
But all pains eminently lie in thee!
 Alas, alas! I hope in vain
My conquer'd soul from out thine hands to gain;
Since all the natives there thou 'ast overthrown,
 And planted garrisons of thine own.

Source:

Cowley, Abraham. The Works of Mr. A. Cowley. vol 2.
Richard Hurd, ed.
London: John Sharpe, 1809. 81-82.

Poetry

Reading Test #1

A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body

Andrew Marvell

Soul

- O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise
A Soul enslav'd so many ways?
With bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands
In Feet; and manacled in Hands.
- (5) Here blinded with an Eye; and there,
Deaf with the drumming of an Ear.
A Soul hung up, as 'twere, in Chains
Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins.
Tortur'd, besides each other part,
- (10) In a vain Head, and double Heart.

Body

- O who shall me deliver whole,
From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?
Which, stretcht upright, impales me so,
That mine own Precipice I go;
- (15) And warms and moves this needless Frame:
(A Fever could but do the same.)
And, wanting where its spite to try,
Has made me live to let me die.
A Body that could never rest,
- (20) Since this ill Spirit it possest.

Soul

- What Magic could me thus confine
Within another's Grief to pine?
Where whatsoever it complain,
I feel, that cannot feel, the pain.
- (25) And all my care its self employs,
That to preserve, which me destroys:
Constrain'd not only to endure
Diseases, but what's worse, the Cure:
And ready oft the Port to gain,
- (30) Am Shipwreckt into Health again.

Body

- But Physic* yet could never reach
The Maladies thou me dost teach;
Whom the first Cramp of Hope dost tear:
And then the Palsy shakes of Fear.
- (35) The Pestilence of Love does heat:
Or Hatred's hidden Ulcer eat.
Joy's cheerful Madness does perplex:
Or Sorrow's other Madness vex.
Which Knowledge forces me to know,
- (40) And Memory will not forgo.
What but a Soul could have the wit
To build me up for Sin so fit?
So Architects do square and hew,
Green Trees that in the Forest grew.

*Physic: medicine

1. The headings of the stanzas, Soul and Body, indicate which one of the two is
(A) being addressed
(B) acting as the deliverer of the other
(C) being described
(D) winning the struggle at the moment
(E) speaking
2. In the poem, which of the following best describes the relationship between the body and the soul?
(A) The body controls the soul.
(B) The soul owns and manages the body.
(C) They are separate and independent.
(D) Each is subject to the demands of the other.
(E) In time, they become completely unified.

3. Which of the following devices is dominant in the first stanza?
 - (A) An extended metaphor of cruel imprisonment
 - (B) An extended definition of the soul
 - (C) Names of parts of the body to represent the whole
 - (D) Internal rhyme to emphasize the internal nature of the struggle
 - (E) End-stopped lines to temper the urgency of the message

4. The notion of an eye that can blind and an ear that can deafen (lines 5-6) suggests that the
 - (A) body is in fact in worse condition than the soul
 - (B) soul claims to have senses, but those senses fail
 - (C) eye and ear impede the soul's perception instead of aiding it
 - (D) eye and ear try continually to perceive the soul but never do
 - (E) fragile eye and ear are stronger than the soul

5. In the context of the first stanza, lines 1-2 express a longing to be
 - (A) freed from an actual prison
 - (B) separated from physical life
 - (C) saved from eternal damnation
 - (D) cured of a crippling ailment
 - (E) released from enslavement to vice

6. Which of the following best sums up what is said in lines 13-14?
 - (A) The body would prefer death to the dictates of the soul.
 - (B) The soul puts the body in the position of always being a danger to itself.
 - (C) The body becomes a danger to others when it ignores what the soul teaches.
 - (D) The body is the stepping-off place for any attempt to understand the nature of the soul.
 - (E) The soul offers the body the chance to achieve new heights.

7. What does line 15 suggest about the nature of the soul?
 - (A) It is the divine element in a person.
 - (B) It is the source of evil as well as good.
 - (C) It confuses by introducing conflicting emotions.
 - (D) It is the animating force in a person.
 - (E) It makes one conscious of physical sensations.

8. Which of the following best restates the question posed in lines 21-22?
 - (A) What constrains me to suffer from experiences that are not naturally my own?
 - (B) What can make me sorrow for the body in its ill state when I have no natural sympathy?
 - (C) What struggle of good and evil makes me both cause the misfortunes of the body and then regret them?
 - (D) Why must the body ultimately come to grief and I be saved?
 - (E) Why must I dwell in another body after my original dwelling place has died?

9. Lines 25-26 are best understood to mean that the
 - (A) soul can neither care nor feel, and so the body has no reason to try to preserve it
 - (B) body ignores the soul's efforts to influence it
 - (C) soul's best attempts to exist in unity with the body end by killing the body
 - (D) body refuses to recognize that it could not live without the soul
 - (E) soul's efforts are used by the body for its own maintenance and, consequently, for the ruination of the soul

10. "Port" (line 29) refers metaphorically to
 - (A) death
 - (B) the body
 - (C) the unity of body and soul
 - (D) illness
 - (E) hell

11. Which of the following best describes the effect of the metaphors in lines 31-36?
 - (A) The likening of emotion to illness suggests that the soul and body are really one.
 - (B) The very number of ailments exaggerates the weakness of the body and the strength of the soul.
 - (C) The mention of teaching implies that knowing oneself well is the key to healing the breach between body and soul.
 - (D) The metaphors stress that the body perceives the emotions physically and, further, that it perceives only their negative effects.
 - (E) The metaphors indicate that the obsession of the body with its own ailments keeps it from giving expression to the soul.

12. The last four lines, which extend the length of the last stanza, have the effect of
- (A) offering a solution to the dilemma of the body and soul
 - (B) providing an epigrammatic summary of the body's view of the soul
 - (C) providing comic relief from the serious conflict in the poem
 - (D) breaking through the irony of the poem to reveal the whole person, body and soul combined
 - (E) finally allowing the soul to argue back within a stanza devoted to the view of the body
13. Which of the following most fully expresses the cleverness of the body in its impingement on the soul?
- (A) "O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise/A Soul enslav'd so many ways?" (lines 1-2)
 - (B) "And, wanting where its spite to try,/Has made me live to let me die." (lines 17-18)
 - (C) "And all my care its self employs,/That to preserve, which me destroys:" (lines 25-26)
 - (D) "But Physic yet could never reach/The Maladies thou me dost teach;" (lines 31-32)
 - (E) "Which Knowledge forces me to know,/And Memory will not forgo." (lines 39-40)