

“The Flea” by John Donne

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest 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 5
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare, 10
Where we almost, nay more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet. 15
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? 20
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 thy self, nor me the weaker now;
’Tis true; then learn how false, fears be: 25
Just so much honor, when thou yield’st to me,
Will waste, as this flea’s death took life from thee.

“Woman’s Constancy” by John Donne

Now thou has loved me one whole day,
Tomorrow when you 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? 5

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? 10

Or, your own end to justify,
For having purposed change and falsehood, you
Can have no way but falsehood to be true?

Vain lunatic, against these ‘scapes I could
Dispute and conquer, if I would, 15
Which I abstain to do,

For by tomorrow, I may think so too.