

Investigate! Metaphysical poetry:

John Donne, *Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward*

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❖ **Setting the scene:**

- At what stage in Donne's life was *Good Friday, 1613* written?
 - What was the significance of Good Friday for him?
- Have you ever had to go somewhere quite the opposite of where you really wanted to go?
 - Can you remember your feelings?

❖ **Going deeper:**

- Look carefully at the subject matter of *Good Friday, 1613*, especially the final section of the poem
 - Are 'corrections' (l.38) the same as punishment?
 - Explain 'That blood which is/The seat of all our Soules' (ll.25-26)
 - How has Mary 'furnish'd ... halfe that sacrifice'?
- Compare the final section with the *Holy Sonnet Batter my Heart*
 - Do you find significant similarities?

❖ **Themes:**

- 'thinke mee worth thine anger'
- What do you understand by the concept of someone being worth punishing?
 - Do you think Donne is posing?
 - How can we assess sincerity in poetry?

❖ **Imagery and symbolism:**

- Look at the imagery Donne uses in *Good Friday, 1613*

- Can you apply the idea of the microcosm to the opening imagery?
- What is the symbolism of the inner journey that Donne is making?

❖ **Language and tone:**

- Look at the language and tone of *Good Friday, 1613*
 - Explain 'that endlesse height which is/Zenith to us, and our Antipodes'
- What would you say the tone of the poem was?
 - Does it allow for a dramatic reading?
 - Or does it need to be quietly meditative?

❖ **Structure and versification:**

- What do you find striking about *Good Friday, 1613*?
 - Even though you may not be the least religious, have you been able to enter into the religious imagination of the poet?
- Look again at the section on symbolism in the poem
 - Is there further symbolism in Donne's allusion to west and east that we have not touched on?