

# Brief Investigations Metaphysical poetry:

Vaughan: *Man, The Night, The Retreat, The Water-fall*

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### *Man*

- Read through Vaughan's *Man*
  - Would you agree with Vaughan that humans are typically restless?
  - Does the poem leave any hope that peace is possible?
- Compare this poem with *The Retreat*
  - Where does the emphasis differ?
- Look at the stanza structure and rhyme scheme
  - Are they suited to convey the sense?

### *The Retreat*

- Read Vaughan's *The Retreat*
  - Why does Vaughan think souls lose this sense of heavenly origin?
- In what sense is a 'gilded Cloud' a shadow of eternity?
- What seems to you the most striking feature of the poem?

### *The Night*

- Read through Vaughan's *The Night*
  - Why is the night 'this worlds defeat' and 'Gods silent, searching flight'?
  - Can you explain the oxymoron of 'dazzling darkness'?
- Examine the stanza form
  - What can you say about how it works?
- How do you welcome the night?
  - Have you ever received revelation then that you don't think you would have received during the day?

### *The water-fall*

- Read through Vaughan's *The Water-fall*
- Compare this poem with his *The Retreat*.
  - What similarities in thought do you notice?
  - What differences do you see in the way it is expressed?
- What is 'My glorious liberty'?
- How might he stagnate?
- Can you unpack the symbolic meaning of the last few lines?
- Have you noticed any other emblems or symbolic meanings?
- Can you identify with seeing meanings in everyday objects or features of nature?
- What strikes you most in the poem?