

# Investigate! Metaphysical poetry:

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#### ❖ **Going deeper:**

Relate *Batter my heart* to your own experiences of, perhaps, wanting to do something good or loving, but finding it difficult

- How would you describe Donne's spiritual life? Do you find his struggles surprising?

#### ❖ **Themes:**

Pick out words and phrases in *Batter my heart* that express Donne's sense of his own sinfulness

- Is this sense of sinfulness a general malaise?
  - Or do there seem to be specific sins behind it?

#### ❖ **Imagery and symbolism:**

- Look at the male/female roles in *Batter my heart*
  - Which role does the poet take?
- Compare this role with that taken in much of his love poetry
  - What significant differences do you see?

#### ❖ **Language and tone:**

- Examine the proportion of statements to commands in *Batter my heart*

- Is there a pattern?
- Is 'commands' exactly the right word?
  - Can you think of better terms to use for the voice he uses to God?

#### ❖ **Structure and versification:**

- Try reading *Batter my heart* in several different ways, perhaps emphasising its fragmented nature or its cohesion
  - Which do you prefer?
- Look at the structure of the octave
  - Is there any uniting force there?
  - Or does it divide into separate parts?
- What do you think are the poem's strengths?
  - Would you say it deserves its reputation?