

Investigate!

Metaphysical poetry: John Donne, *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*

❖ **Going deeper:**

Can you complete the conceits mentioned so far:

- If good men die like this, then . . . ?
- If the movement of the planets is silent, then ...?
- Look at each of the conceits in *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*
 - Do they follow logically from one another
 - Or is each one a separate analogy?
 - If so, how do we get a sense of progress in the poem?
- Could the conceits have been re-arranged?
- Do you think that the final conceit is perhaps too neat? What is its logic?

❖ **Themes:**

- Do you think Donne is in denial that the lovers are to be separated?
- If so, what does he gain?

❖ **Imagery and symbolism:**

- Look at the image Donne develops in the last three stanzas:
 - Do you feel that this final image rather hi-jacks the poem, so that at the end this is all we remember about the poem?

- Or do you feel it provides a neat and memorable ending?

- Compare and contrast the use of imagery here to that in *A Valediction: of Weeping*

- Do you see any significant differences?

❖ **Language and tone:**

Have you found *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* easier to understand than other poems by Donne?

- If so, why do you think this might be so?
 - Is it the subject matter or the language?

❖ **Structure and versification:**

- What is the effect of the simple versification in *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*?
 - Does the poem have the same compactness about it that Donne's other poems do?
- What to you are the strengths of this poem?
 - How well does it describe the universal phenomenon of lovers having to part from one another?