

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To examine this poem, particularly as an example of religious poetry.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Imagine that you are ringing a 'rant line'.
 - Students have 60 seconds to deliver their message.
 - They could speak on any subject (sporting, topical, or even school-related if you dare!).
 - If you have the time and technology, you could record the messages and play them back.
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Read *The Collar* aloud in a 'rant line' voice.
 - You could have this recorded in advance to play as if it were a phone message to the students. (There is a reading by Peggy Ashcroft on Youtube.)
 - For a performance, what advice would you give to an actor?
 - Students could prepare a reading, in pairs. Where will they change voices? Will they use both voices together at times?
- ❖ **Textual examination:**
 - The metre is iambic, but line lengths are varied. Why is this? (Sounds more conversational, and perhaps suggests a rebellious spirit.)
 - The rhetorical questions, mostly monosyllabic words and images of constraint add to this effect. Does this give power to the argument, or is it just a rant?
 - In the light of your answer, do you react to the speaker?
 - The poet believes that God, because he is God, does not need to enter into the argument. What is it that brings the poet's argument to a sudden end?
 - What does this poem have to say to a non-believing reader?
 - Can something be gained from the poem through the poet's experience, even if the reader does not share that experience?
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Rework your opening rant in verse form.
 - Does this make it more powerful in any way? If so, how and why?
- ❖ **Critical task:** 'Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical.'
 - Explain why you agree or disagree with these words of Dr Johnson.
- ❖ **Extension task:**
 - Find examples of modern poetry on a religious theme.
 - Does it differ much from that of the Metaphysical poets in approach or conclusion? If so, how?
 - How does this compare with religious poetry from faiths other than Christianity?