

Two *Carpe Diem* Poems

Name: _____

Carpe diem is Latin for “seize the day” or “enjoy the present.”

Key Terms & Concepts			
speaker	dramatic monologue	metaphor	tone
apostrophe	personification	paradox	rhyme scheme

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun, 5
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer; 10
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former. 12 – **former** – previous, past, earlier

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And, while ye may, go marry; 13 – **coy** – shy, bashful, wary
For having lost but once your prime, 15
You may forever tarry. 16 – **tarry** – to remain or loiter someplace;
to be late or tardy

Analysis Questions

1. What does the title of this poem tell us? What can we infer about the speaker? To whom is the poem addressed?
2. Notice the image the speaker creates in the first stanza when he discusses rosebuds and a flower. What does the imagery in stanza 1 make us see or recognize about **time** and about **life**?
3. Notice the image and metaphor in the second stanza when the speaker describes the sun. To what does he compare the sun, and what does this metaphor make us see or recognize about **time** and about **life**?
4. In the last stanza, what does the speaker urge his audience to do? What do the last two lines mean? Overall, what point does this poem make about time? Life? Love?
5. What does the poem's rhyme contribute to its overall tone? How would the poem's tone be different if the author used no rhyme at all?
6. Does the poet use line breaks or punctuation marks to express complete thoughts? Give an example from the poem to illustrate the correctness of your answer.

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

To His Coy Mistress

Had we but world enough, and time,
 This coyness, lady, were no crime.
 We would sit down, and think which way
 To walk, and pass our long love's day.
 Thou by the Indian Ganges' side 5
 Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
 Of Humber would complain. I would
 Love you ten years before the flood,
 And you should, if you please, refuse 10
 Till the conversion of the Jews.
 My vegetable love should grow
 Vaster than empires and more slow;
 An hundred years should go to praise
 Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
 Two hundred to adore each breast, 15
 But thirty thousand to the rest;
 An age at least to every part,
 And the last age should show your heart.
 For lady, you deserve this state, 20
 Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
 Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
 And yonder all before us lie
 Deserts of vast eternity.
 Thy beauty shall no more be found, 25
 Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
 My echoing song; then worms shall try
 That long-preserved virginity,
 And your quaint honor turn to dust,
 And into ashes all my lust: 30
 The grave's a fine and private place,
 But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
 Sits on the skin like morning dew,
 And while thy willing soul transpires 35
 At every pore with instant fires,
 Now let us sport us while we may,
 And now, like amorous birds of prey,
 Rather at once our time devour
 Than languish in his slow-chapped power. 40
 Let us roll all our strength and all
 Our sweetness up into one ball,
 And tear our pleasures with rough strife
 Thorough the iron gates of life:
 Thus, though we cannot make our sun 45
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Name:

Notes:
 1 - **Had we** – If we had (a situation that is contrary to fact.)
 2 - **were** – would be

5 - **Ganges** – a large river that runs across most of India
 7 - **Humber** – the river in England that flows through Marvell's hometown of Hull
 7 - **complain** – sing plaintive love songs
 8 - **flood** – the Biblical flood

10 - **conversion of the Jews** – It was a popular belief that this event would occur just before the Last Judgment and the end of the world.
 11 - **vegetable** – not in the modern sense, but in the sense of **living growth that slowly and constantly increases**

19 - **state** – dignity

21 - **But** – This word shifts from the hypothetical situation of stanza 1 (which is contrary to fact) and focuses on reality.

29 - **quaint** – old-fashioned, out of fashion, picky

33 - **Now, therefore,** – With these words, the speaker proposes a plan of action.
 35 - **transpires** – breathes out

40 - **slow-chapped** – slow-jawed

44 - **Thorough** – through
 45 - **Thus** – therefore

Analysis Questions

1. Analyze the **structure** of the poem, focusing on the organization of the poem into **stanzas** and the **logical development** of the speaker's ideas. Pay attention to what "point" the speaker seems to be making in each stanza, and to how these points come together to form his larger argument.
2. What are the **significant uses of diction, imagery, and figurative language throughout the poem**, and how do these literary techniques contribute to the speaker's tone and argument? (For figurative language, pay attention not just to simile, metaphor, and personification, but also to language such as hyperbole—i.e., exaggeration—in stanza one and to irony in stanza two.)
3. How do the last two lines of the poem relate to the rest of the poem? What do the lines **mean**? Are they paradoxical (i.e., self-contradictory) or not?
4. Is the speaker's tone cynical and manipulative, or sincere? In other words, is he saying these things just to get his coy mistress into bed, or does he seem to believe that he is speaking the truth? How can we tell?