

VALEDICTION FORBIDING MOURNING  
BY JOHN DONNE



# METAPHYSICAL POETRY

- Meta : after, beyond
- Physical : concrete
- Metaphysical : after the physical
- Metaphysics deals with questions that can't be explained by science.
- It questions the nature of reality in a philosophical way.



- "Metaphysical poetry" is not regarded as a genre of poetry.
- It is also described as "Post Renaissance Period "
- It is a term coined by Samuel Johnson.
- Literary critic and poet Samuel Johnson first coined the term 'metaphysical poetry' in his book. The name of the book is *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets (1179-1781)*.
- Metaphysical poetry has its roots in 17th century England.

# Some of the major characteristic of metaphysical poetry

- ▶ It is marked by intellectual wit and passionate thought.
- ▶ It is often in the form of an intense, urgent argument.
- ▶ It employs a subtle often outrageous logic.
- ▶ The use of images and metaphors drawn from varied and often obscure fields of knowledge. The images are sometimes elaborate, sometime condensed.
- ▶ The use of metaphysical conceits (that is witty, ingenious comparison between dissimilar things or concepts)
- ▶ The skillful use of paradox, pun and startling similes
- ▶ A striking dramatic quality and abrupt transitioning in thought and feeling.
- ▶ The poetic language and rhythm are often those of living speech.

# About the author

- ▶ John Donne, one of the most innovative of the English poets, was born into a Roman Catholic family in 1572.
- ▶ He was educated at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities.
- ▶ Though he did not take any academic degrees or practice law, he read widely in knowledge areas such as theology, medicine, law and the classics.
- ▶ As a preacher, Donne was known for his metaphorical style, knowledge and wit.
- ▶ He is a metaphysical poet died in 1631.

# Figure of speech used in this poem

▶ **"So let us melt... nor high tempests move"**

- ▶ The figure of speech used in this line is hyperbole or exaggeration.
- ▶ The poet speaks about raising floods of tears and tempests of sighs, which is evidently an exaggeration for the sake of effect.

▶ **"Twere profanation of our joys to tell the laity our love"**

- ▶ The metaphor is the figure of speech used in this line. True lovers are compared to ordinary priests. If they weep and sigh during separation, they will be like laymen and not like the priests of true love

▶ **"Moving of the earth brings harms and fears;**

**Men reckon what it did, and meant"**

- ▶ The figure of speech of earth quake in these lines suggest that lovers should not express great emotions at the time of parting.

# John Donne as a metaphysical poet

- ▶ John Donne is the foremost metaphysical poet in English.
- ▶ Donne's intellectual wit and energy, his passionate thought and his power of poetic argument make him the first metaphysical poet in English
- ▶ Dryden said that Donne "affects metaphysics" and "uses nice speculation of philosophy" in his love poetry.
- ▶ Donne's poem, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" possesses all the characteristic features of metaphysical poetry.

'Twere profanation of our joys  
To tell the laity our love

**- A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING -**





## *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*

- As virtuous men pass mildly away [2],  
And whisper to their souls, to go [3],  
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,  
The breath goes now, and some say, no:

4. let us melt: The love between the poet and his lover is so intense that they melt into each other.

- So let us melt [4], and make no noise,  
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move [5],  
' Twere profanation [6] of our joys  
To tell the laity [7] our love.

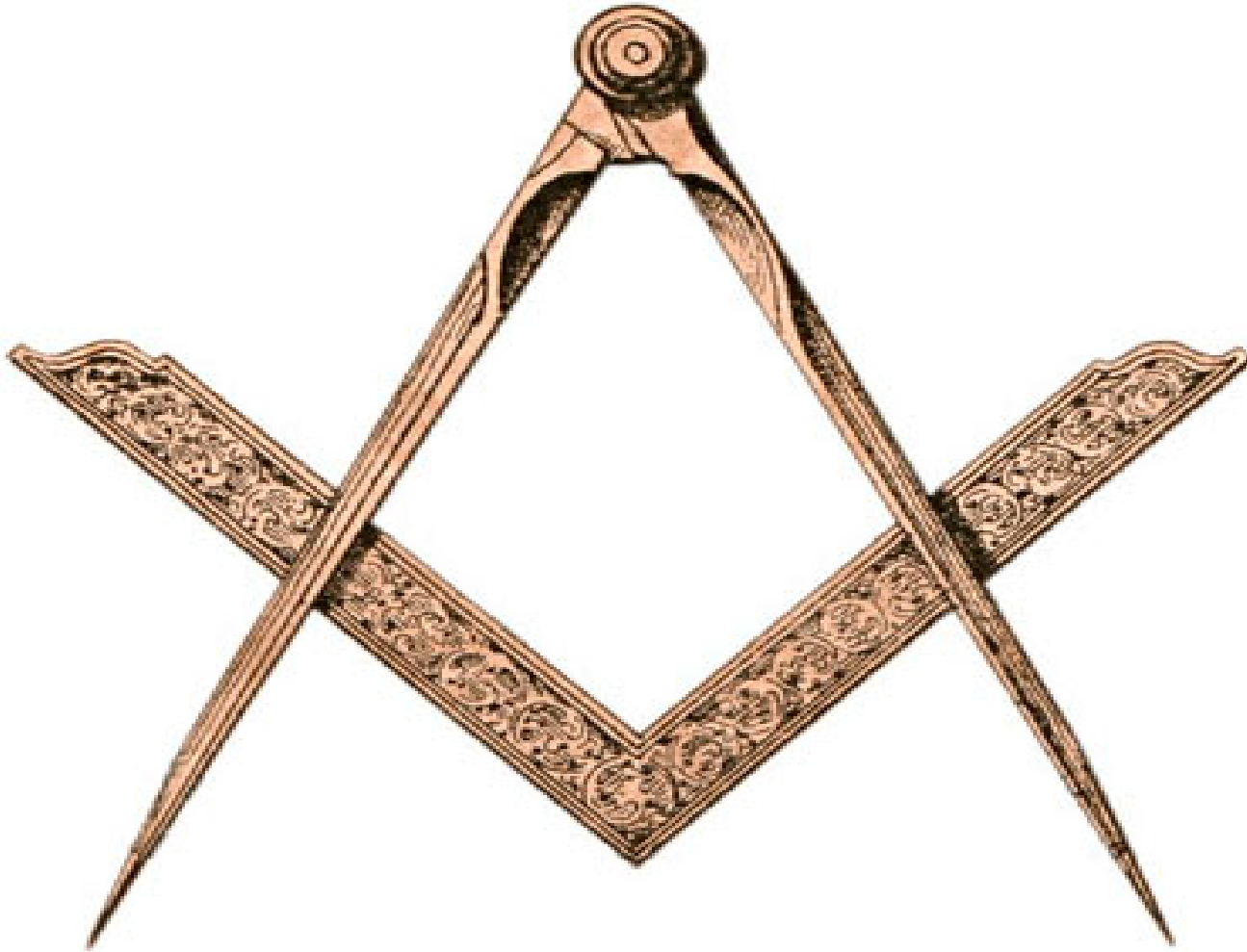
5. Line 6: The lovers ought to part like virtuous men bidding farewell to the world, without any outward show of grief. The exaggerated expressions "tear-floods, sigh-tempests" are Petrarchan conceits that were popular during the time of Donne.  
move: stir up

- Moving of th' earth [8] brings harms and fears,  
Men reckon what it did and meant,  
But trepidation of the spheres [9],  
Though greater [10] far, is innocent [11].

# Figure of speech used in this poem

- ▶ **“So let us melt... nor high tempests move”**
  - ▶ The figure of speech used in this line is hyperbole or exaggeration.
  - ▶ The poet speaks about raising floods of tears and tempests of sighs, which is evidently an exaggeration for the sake of effect.
- ▶ **“’Twere profanation of our joys to tell the laity our love”**
  - ▶ The metaphor is the figure of speech used in this line. True lovers are compared to ordinary priests. If they weep and sigh during separation, they will be like laymen and not like the priests of true love
- ▶ **“Moving of the earth brings harms and fears;  
Men reckon what it did, and meant”**
  - ▶ The figure of speech of earth quake in these lines suggest that lovers should not express great emotions at the time of parting.

# Conceits-Vague Comparison



If they be Two, they are two so  
As stiff twin compasses are two;  
Thy soul, the fixed foot ,makes no  
show  
To move ,but doth, if the other do.

**Fine Example of Platonic Love**

**The love between the husband  
and wife is built upon trust**

**“And Though it in the centre sit,  
Yet when the other far doth roam,”**

The lovers are a team , and so long as she is true to him, he will be able to return to exactly the point where they left off before his journey.

Thy firmness makes my  
circle just,  
And makes me end where  
I begun

- Thus the poem extends the worldly love to the spiritual level as often The BIBLE stresses on the truthfulness of the bride(humans) to the bridegroom(God)