

"Sweetest Love: John Donne; Lec Series: -52  
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## Sweetest Love: John Donne:

'Sweetest Love, I do not go' by John Donne is a five stanza poem that is separated into sets of eight lines or Octaves. The lines follow a pattern of ABAB CDCD, alternating end sounds as the poet said fit. In regards to meter and rhythm, the lines alternate greatly in length. But there is an element of unity in the fact that each stanza is separated into two sets of lines, or quatrains.

'Sweetest Love, I do not go' was first published in 1633 in his posthumous collection 'Songs and Sonnets'.

In the first line of the first stanza, the speaker begins by addressing his lover. He tells her that he is very fond of her, and between the both there, there happens a long lasting relationship. He further, tells her that he is not leaving because he is "Wear[ed]" of her. He, forcefully, adds that he is also not leaving because he thinks the world can provide him with a lover better or "fitter," than "thee". Ahead, he explains that his departure is like any other - temporary. In particular, he is thinking of the greatest departure - death. Even that is <sup>only</sup> going to go on for a fixed amount of time.

In the second stanza, the lover utilizes the sun as an example of the temporal nature of his trip. He reminds his beloved that they saw the sun go "hence" yesterday but it is "here" today. In order to further calm down his beloved, Donne's lover compares himself to the sun.

The sun, he states, does not have any "desire" or "sense". They are similar in this way as there is nothing that could throw him off his chosen path.

In the next lines he continues his comparison. The sun and the lover might be similar in their steadfastness, but the lover has something that the sun lacks. Lover is much faster. He plans on making a "Speedier Journey": than the sun is able to. The lover is going to accomplish this because he has "more wings and spurs".

In the third stanza, the lover or the speaker turns to the feebleness of "man's power". There is no way for humankind to control how time passes. He depicts this through an image of the failing and fading of good fortune and one's inability to "add another hour". The same can be said about the past, a perfect time can not be relived.

At the fourth line, there is another turn, just as was present in the

first and second stanzas. This very purposeful separation allows the speaker to turn to a new but related topic. This time he is interested in discussing strength, particularly how human strength is able to fight off or improve bad situations. The speaker believes that "we" a reference to himself and the listener or beloved, as well as the human race as a whole, are able to "teach" bad chance "art and length" and keep it from taking over one's remaining days.

In the fourth stanza, Donne's speaker uses repetition to delineate his own unhappiness at his beloved's sadness. He imagines a future in which she longs for his return and does damage through these emotions. The speaker does not want his lover to feel this way. Instead he would rather her accept the separation as temporary and continue on with her life. Her weeping is "unkindly unkind". He describes how if she she is weeping she is hurting him. Then adds, if she is hurting him then she can not love him. He hopes through this argument to convince her not to be so depressed when he is gone. The final ~~line~~ line is an expression of his own love for the beloved.

In the final stanza of the the song, Donne's speaker concludes his argument

by summing up everything he has already said. He tells his beloved that if she is thinking "ill" of him, or weeping over his absence then "Destiny may take thy part". This means that he will end up coming to harm because of her emotions.

Rather than harm him, this love, or herself, the speaker asks that his lover imagine that they are in bed together. They are keeping one another alive through their love and that means that they will "never," or never, "parted be".

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