

The following two poems are examples of *Carpe Diem* poetry (Latin for “Seize the day”), focused on experiencing all that life has to offer without waiting on time, occasion, or decorum. Consider that carefully while reading.

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 to-day  
 To-morrow will be dying.

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

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

15 Then be not coy, but use your time,  
 And while ye may go marry :  
 For having lost but once your prime  
 You may for ever tarry.

- Characterize the style and language in this poem and explain how those elements impact the meaning.
- How does the speaker use fear as a motivator? For what? Does his argument persuade you? Why/why not?
- The poem is directed at “Virgins”, and pointedly female ones. What words connect to a feminine sensibility? How would the poem change if it were “To the Men”?

*If you were in English 4, then you are already acquainted with the poems and the bulleted questions. Given that you are already familiar with the poems, please take your knowledge and write an essay that compares or contrasts elements of these two pieces.*

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  
 Till the conversion of the Jews. 10  
 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,  
 Nor would I love at lower rate. 20

But at my back I always hear  
 Time's winged chariot hurrying near;  
 And yonder all before us lie  
 Deserts of vast eternity. 25  
 Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
 Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
 My echoing song; then worms shall try  
 That long preserv'd virginity,  
 And your quaint honour 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 thy 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 am'rous birds of prey,  
 Rather at once our time devour,  
 Than languish in his slow-chapp'd 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.

- Like Herrick, Marvell is making use of the *Carpe Diem* philosophy of the Metaphysical poets (and like Herrick he relies on the word “coy” to impart characterization of females). Choose three of the strongest images that support this philosophy and defend your choices.
- This is essentially one giant pickup line. Would it work for you? Why or why not?