

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

John Donne, 1572 - 1631

As virtuous men pass mildly away,

And whisper to their souls to go,

Whilst some of their sad friends do say,

"The breath goes now," and some say, "No,"

So let us melt, and make no noise,

No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;

'Twere profanation of our joys

To tell the laity our love.

Moving of the earth brings harms and fears,

Men reckon what it did and meant;

But trepidation of the spheres,

Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit

Absence, because it doth remove

Those things which elemented it.

But we, by a love so much refined

That our selves know not what it is,

Inter-assured of the mind,

Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,

Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion.

Like gold to airy thinness beat.

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;

And though it in the center sit,

Yet when the other far doth roam,

It leans, and hearkens after it,

And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,

Like the other foot, obliquely run;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

And makes me end where I begun.