THE SUNNE RISING

By
John Donne
(1572-1631)

The Sun Rising by John Donne

Busy old fool, unruly Sun:
Why dost thou thus
Through windows and through curtains call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late schoolboys and sour prentices,
Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices.
Love all alike no season knows nor clime:
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.
Thy beams so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink
But that I would not lose her sight so long.
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late tell me
Whether both the Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou leftst them or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou sawst yesterday
And thou shalt hear: All here in one bed lay.
She is all states, and all princes I:
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compared to this
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou Sun art half as happy as we
In that the world's contracted thus:
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere:
This bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere.

Text and Tradition

- The Sun Rising is one of Donne's most noted love poem
- It is an example of the AUBADE a "DAWN POEM"

DAWN POEM

- It is a love poetry popular in the Troubador verse pf Provençe and the Languedoc, in which lovers express their displeasure for the night's end.

Seventeenth Century Poetry

- How was Elizabethan poetry?
- Elizabethan poetry was mainly musical, descriptive and romantic.
- It was formal
- Responding to the decorum of the sonnet structure and continued the tradition of the chivalric courtly love

Courtly Love

- What do you know about it ?
- According to the tradition the poet addresses from a position of distance the idealized object of his unreacheable and unattainable love.

John Donne and the Metaphysical Poets

- For Donne and the M.poets the distance between subject and object disappears
- The figure of the beloved is no longer remote, but
- Actual
- Close
- Possessed

Metaphysical Imagination

- The century was considered a
- “warlike”
- Various
- Tragic
- For these reasons the poetic language conveys much of its turbolence and variety

Poetic Language

- There is a sort of violent, urgent tone
- Shocking or surprising images
- While Elizabethan poetry is often descriptive
- The Metaphysical style is
- Intellectual
- Persuasive
- Discursive

Metaphysical style

- Metaphysical poetry can be defined by three important characteristics:
- 1 – concentration
- 2 – conceit
- 3 - tone

Concentration

- The metaphysical poem is usually a short, concise poem which demands intellectual attention in order to understand the meaning

Conceit

"an extended metaphor"

- It is a striking parallel or similarity made between two unlike elements.
- It function as a brief spark or revelation, that illuminates incongrous similarity and then to return to their original dissimilar nature.
- In the poem it is explained through the use of "WIT" (intelligence)

Tone

- The tone is colloquial
- Direct and personal
- Dramatic
- Use of the “I voice”

  (surprising directness of the speaking voice – vivid speech)
- The study of extraordinary thoughts in ordinary situations.

Themes

- Metaphysical poetry is very immediate and realistic
- Describes love where love is returned
- Physical, sensuous love
- Anti-chivalric tradition

The Sun Rising Analysis

- *BUSY old fool, unruly Sun,*
  Why dost thou thus,
  Through windows, and through curtains, call on us ?
  Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run ?

- Lying in bed with his lover, the speaker blames the **rising sun**, calling it a "busy old fool," and asking why it must bother them through windows and curtains. Love is not subject to season or to time, he says.

The Sun Rising Analysis

- Saucy pedantic wretch go chide
  Late school-boys and sour prentices,
  Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride,
  Call country ants to harvest offices ;
  Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
  Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

- Here the poet admonishes the SUN "*Saucy pedantic wretch"* to go and bother late school boys and sour (*unpleasent*) apprentices

The Sun Rising Analysis

- To tell the court huntsmen that the King (James I) is ready to go hunting.
- To call (wake) the peasants to go harvesting
- Here the poet compares the laborious ants to the peasants in their activities.

- Love is the most important thing and cannot be bothered. Love is eternal and doesn’t know the rags ot time such as:
- Seasons, months, days, hours

- *Thy beams so reverend, and strong*
  Why shouldst thou think ?
  I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
  But that I would not lose her sight so long.
- *Here the speaker is still addressing to the sun questioning his power.*
- *What makes you think that your beam are so strong when I could* eclipse (shut) them by simply closing my eyes.

- If he (the lover) doesn't do it is simply not to lose the sight of his beloved for even an istant.

- *If her eyes have not blinded thine,*
  Look, and to-morrow late tell me,
  Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine
  Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.
  Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
  And thou shalt hear, "All here in one bed lay."

- Using Petrarchan conceit that Shakespeare mocks in the opening line of Sonnet 130.
- *“my mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”*

- Donne tells the sun that if her eyes have not blinded *the sun’s eyes*, it should report the next day whether the treasures of India (*West and East Indies – home to exotic spices and rich mines*) are still in the same place or if they are in bed with the speaker
  - *"All here in one bed lay."*

- Still addressing to the sun the poet says that if the sun asks about all those kings he saw yesterday, he will learn that they all lie in bed with the speaker.

- *She's all states, and all princes I ;*
  Nothing else is ;
  Princes do but play us ; compared to this,
  All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
  Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,
  In that the world's contracted thus ;

- The poet asserts that his beloved is like every contry in the world, and he is like every king, nothing else is real.

Princes do but play us ; compared to this,
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.

- Princes simply play at having countries and compared to what he had, all honor is mimicry – an imperfect imitation of their exalted state, made by love.
- All wealth is alchemy compared to the splendor of love

- Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,
  In that the world's contracted thus ;
  Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
  To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
  Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere ;
  This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere.

- The sun, the speaker says, is half as happy as he and his lover is since the world is contracted into their bed and so making the sun's job much easier in its old age, without difficulties, an now all it has to do is to shine on their bed and in doing so it will shine on the whole world
- *This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere.*

Commentary

- The poem is built around a few hyperbolic assertion
- First
- The sun has an observant personality of an old busybody

Commentary

- Second
- Love, as the poet asserts, “no season knows, nor clime/ Nor hours,days, months, which are the rags of time”;

Commentary

- Thrid
- The speaker's love affair is so important to the universe that kings and princes simply copy it.
- The world is contained within their bedroom.

Commentary

- Of course these three assertions represent, describe a state of feeling.
- The bedroom seems to enclose all the matters in the world.
- Love has been disturbed by an intruder - the rising sun.
- The pretention that each of these subjective state of feeling is an objective truth

Form

- The poem is made of three regular stanzas of ten lines long and follow the following rhyme scheme:
- ABBACDCDEE
- The metre of the poem follows a line-stress pattern of the kind:

Form

- Lines one, five and six are metered in iambic tetrameter (four feet)
- Line two is in dimeter (two feet)
- Lines three, four and seven through ten are in pentameter (five feet)

Hyperbole

- *A figure of speech in which the expression is an evident exaggeration of the meaning intended to be conveyed, or by which things are represented as much greater or less, better or worse, than they really are.*
- *A statement exaggerated fancifully, through excitement, or for effect.*

Troubadors 1/2

- A **troubador** (or **troubadour**) was a composer and performer of songs in particular styles during the Middle Ages in Europe.
- The word troubadour comes from the Occitan verb "trobar" which means find. It is used to designate artists using occitan or *langue d'oc* whose style spread to the trouvères who used the langues d'oïl of the north of France.
- The style flourished in the twelfth century and was often imitated in the thirteenth. Many troubadors travelled for great distances, aiding in the transmission of news from one region to another.

Troubadors 2/2

- Troubadors mainly dealt with themes of chivalry and courtly love, although their songs might deal with all sorts of other themes as well. Perhaps most famous were the songs addressed by the singer to a married lover. Perhaps due to the prevalence of arranged marriages at the time, this theme of true love outside the bonds of marriage (usually chaste love, at least in formal works) apparently hit a strong chord with the listeners. The aubade formed one popular genre.