

## The Metaphysical Poetry of John Donne

### “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”

1. The diction of the title implies or predicts what kind of tone?
2. In what manner does the speaker suggest they part?
3. To what does the speaker compare this parting?
4. What is Donne’s purpose in mentioning beaten gold?
5. Explain’s Donne’s conceit comparison with the compass.
6. Donne describes how he hopes his wife will act by making fun of how other lovers \_\_\_\_\_ when they part.
7. Do you sense that Donne is intellectualizing the separation because he truly fears the parting? Why or why not?
8. Would such a poem or sentiment impress you?
9. In what way does the love of the speaker and his chosen one surpass that of other lovers?

### Donne’s Metaphysical Poetry

#### “Death Be Not Proud”

1. Recall what you know about the structure of sonnets. What kind of sonnet has Donne written here?
2. To whom does the speaker speak?
3. What device is employed in the treatment of this audience as animate?
4. What message does the speaker have for this audience?
5. What does this poem imply about the poet’s religious beliefs?

## Meditation Poetry of John Donne

### Meditation 17

1. What is the bell referred to in the opening lines? What does it signal?
2. Donne points out that a very sick individual may be too sick to realize that the bell is tolling for him. He concludes that "perchance I may think myself so much better than I am. . . they who are about me may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not." What does he mean by this?
3. Why does John Donne say he should be concerned about each child's baptism and each parishioner's funeral in the church? Why does it affect him even if he doesn't know the child or the deceased parishioner?
4. What are some of the "translators" Donne says God employs as the author of humanity? What does he mean by this?
5. What does Donne mean when he says, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main"?
6. Why does Donne say Europe should be concerned if a single clod of land is washed away into the sea? How does that correspond to the way humanity should be concerned if a single person dies?
7. Why does Donne think that "Any man's death diminishes me"?
8. Why should a person never "send to know" (i.e. ask) for whom a funeral bell is tolling? What is the inevitable answer?
9. Explain the conceit about affliction or suffering being like buried gold inside a man's bowels. How does Donne suggest we can benefit from the suffering of others?