

1650

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Andrew Marvell

Marvell, Andrew (1621-1678) - English poet and satirist best known for his early lyric poems, he was assistant for a time to John Milton and later a member of Parliament. In the 20th century renewed appreciation of Marvell's work was sparked by the critical interest of T. S. Eliot. To His Coy Mistress (1650) - One of Marvell's and England's best-known love lyrics. Opening lines: Had we but world enough and time, / This coyness, Lady, were no crime. ...

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
 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.
 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;
 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.

But at my back I always hear
 Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
 And yonder all before us lie
 Deserts of vast eternity.
 Thy beauty shall no more be found,
 Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
 My echoing song: then worms shall try
 That long preserved virginity,
 And your quaint honour turn to dust,
 And into ashes all my lust:
 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
 At every pore with instant fires,
 Now let us sport us while we may,
 And now, like amorous birds of prey,
 Rather at once our time devour,

Than languish in his slow-chapt power.
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
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

THE END