

M.A. IV Semester
 Paper XIV PG1-16 [61-4016]

"To His Coy Mistress"

Andrew Marvell

Summary of the poem

The poem is spoken by a male lover to his female beloved as an attempt to convince her to sleep with him. The speaker argues that the lady's shyness and hesitancy would be acceptable if the two had world enough, and time. "But because they are finite human beings, he thinks they should take advantage of their sensual embodiment while it lasts. He says that he can justify her coyness in this regard.

He says if there is enough time she can keep herself busy in ~~scolding~~ scolding rubies on the silver orange and he will complain about his unfulfilled love on Humber river bank in England. Having endless time, he can spend one hundred years in appreciating her and her physical organs. But it is impossible due to fast moving time.

He tells the lady that her beauty, as well as her "long preserved virginity," will only become food for worms unless she gives herself to him while she lives. Rather than preserve any lofty ideals of chastity and virtue, the speaker affirms, the lovers ought to "roll all our strength, and all our sweetness, up into one ball." He is alluding to their physical bodies coming together in the act of lovemaking.



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 Loves Day.
Thou by the *Indian Ganges* side
Should'st 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.

Deserts of vast Eternity.

Thy Beauty shall no more be found,

Nor, in thy marble Vault, shall sound

My ecchoing Song: then Worms shall try

That long preserv'd 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 hew

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 am'rous birds of prey,

Rather at once our Time devour,

Than languish in his slow-chapt pow'r.

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.^[1]