

# Metaphysical Poetry

English Literature (I), week 12

- John Donne (1572-1631)
  - “The Flea”
  - “Song”
  - “The Good-Morrow”
  - “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”
  - “The Indifferent”
  
  - Holy Sonnet 1

# Donne's Society

- Death of Elizabeth I (1603)
- James I : from Expansion to Contraction,
- Plots against him, Gunpowder Plot (1605)
- Charles I (James I's son)(1625-49):
- Dissolve and Reconvene Parliaments
- Civil Wars: Oliver Cromwell

# Culture

- Literature: from Exuberance to
- Restraint/ Limited to the Few
- The Beginning of Great English
- Philosophers: Bacon, Hobbes.....

## The Metaphysical Conceit

- Samuel Johnson, “The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show learning was their whole endeavour.” (*Life of Cowley*)
- “[T]he most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together” (Johnson)
- Against the Elizabethan smoothness, against the stylized images

## Examples of Metaphysical Conceits

- “For God’s sake hold your tongue, and let me love” (Donne)
- “And all your graces no more use shall have/ Than a Sun dyall in a grave” (Donne)

# Other Metaphysical Poets

- Robert Crashaw
- George Herbert
- Henry Vaughan

## *The Flea* (Ask a Lady to Yield)

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,  
How little that which thou deniest me is;  
Me it sucked first, and now sucks thee,  
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;

>>Next



Thou know'st that this cannot be said  
A sin, or shame, or loss of maidenhead,  
Yet this enjoys before it woo,  
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,  
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

>>Next

## *The Flea*

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,  
Where we almost, nay more than married are.  
This flea is you and I, and this  
Our marriage bed and marriage temple is;

>>Next

Though parents grudge, and you, we are met,  
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.

Though use make you apt to kill me,  
Let not to that, self-murder added be,  
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

>>Next

## *The Flea*

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since  
Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?  
Wherein could this flea guilty be,  
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?

>>Next

Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou  
Find'st not thy self nor me the weaker now;  
    'Tis true; then learn how falst fears be:  
Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me,  
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

# Question 1

- The tone of “The Flea” has been constantly talked about. How should the poem be read? Seriously or playfully? Why?

*The Good-Morrow* (A Lover to his  
Sweetheart)

I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I  
Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till then,  
But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?  
Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den?

>>Next

‘Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.  
If ever any beauty I did see,  
Which I desired, and got, ‘twas but a dream of thee.

>>Next



And now good morrow to our waking souls,  
Which watch not one another out of fear;  
For love all love of other sights controls,  
And makes one little rooman everywhere.

>>Next

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,  
Let maps to others, worlds on worlds have shown:  
Let us possess one worlds; each hath one, and is one.

>>Next

## *The Good-Morrow*

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,  
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;  
Where can we fine two better hemispheres,  
Without sharp North, without declining West?

>>Next

Whatever dies was not mixed equality;  
If our two loves be one, ot thou and I  
Love so alike that none fo slacken, none can die.

*Song* (impossible to find a faithful woman)

Go and catch a falling star,  
Get with child a mandrake root,  
Tell me where all past years are,  
Or who cleft the Devil's foot,

>>Next

Teach me to hear mermaids singing,  
Or to keep off envy's singing,  
And find  
What wind  
Serves to advance an honest mind.

>>Next

## *Song*

If thou beest born to strange sights,  
Things invisible to see,  
Ride ten thousand days and nights,  
Till age snow white hairs on thee,

>>Next

Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me  
All strange wonders that befell thee,  
    And swear  
    No where  
Lives a woman true, and fair.

>>Next



If thou find'st one, let me know,  
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;  
Yet do not, I would not go,  
Though at next door we might meet;  
Though she were true when you met her,

>>Next

And last till you write your letter,

Yet she

Will be

False, ere I come, to two, or three.

*A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* (Lovers'  
Constancy)

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;

>>Next

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.

>>Next

Moving of th'earth brings harms and fears,  
Men reckon what it did and meant;  
But trepidation of the spheres,  
Though greater far, is innocent.

>>Next

## *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*

Dull sublunary lovers' love

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit

Absence, because it doth remove

Those things which elemented it.

>>Next

But we, by a love so much refined  
That our selves know not what it is,  
Inter-assurèd of the mind,  
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

>>Next

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.

>>Next



## *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*

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 th' other to.

>>Next

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.

>>Next

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
    Like th' other foot, obliquely run;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
    And makes me end where I begun.

## *The Indifferent* (fickle lovers)

- I can love both fair and brown,
- Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays,
- Her who loves loneliness best, and her who masks and plays,
- Her whom the country formed, and who the town,
- Her who believes, and her who tries,
- Her who still weeps with spongy eyes

## (A Woman Protests)

- And her who is dry cork, and never cries;
  - I can love her, and her, and you, and you,
  - I can love any, so she be not true.
- 
- Will no other vice content you?
  - Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
  - Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?

(speaker's response)

- Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
- O we are not, be not you so;
- Let me, and do you, twenty know.
- Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
- Must I, who came to travail through you,
- Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?

- Venus heard me sign this song,
- And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore,
- She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
- She went, examined, and returned ere long,
- And said, Alas, some two or three
- Poor heretics in love there be,

- Which think to 'stablish dangerous constancy.
- But I have told them, Since you will be true,
- You shall be true to them who are false to you.



# Donne's *Holy Sonnets*

- Born to a Roman Catholic family (1572)
- Ordained in the Anglican Church (1615)
- Sonnets: intellectual, philosophical, symptomatic of an intellectual's search for faith

# Sonnet 1

- Thou hast made me, and shall thy work decay?
- Repair me now, for now mine end doth haste;
- I run to death, and death meets me as fast,
- And all my pleasures are like yesterday,

- I dare not move my dim eyes any way,
- Despair behind, and death before doth cast
- Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste
- By sin in it, which it towards hell doth weigh.

- Only thou art above, and when towards thee
- By thy leave I can look, I rise again;
- But our old subtle foe so tempteth me
- That not one hour myself I can sustain.
- Thy grace may wing me to prevent his art,
- And thou like adamant draw mine iron heart.

# Sonnet 18

- Show me, dear Christ, thy spouse so bright and clear.
- What! Is it she which on the other shore
- Goes richly painted? Or which, robbed and tore,
- Laments and mourns in Germany and here?
- .....

- Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights
- First travel we to seek, and then make love?
- Betray, kind husband, thy spouse to our sights,
- And let mine amorous soul court thy mild dove,
- Who is most true and pleasing to thee then
- When she is embraced and open to most men.

## Question 2

- The following question is by no means original. It appears in many Study Guide: “Compare/contrast the personas/the narrators of poems like “The Flea,” “The Indifferent,” and “Song” with that of “The Holy Sonnets”.

- John Milton (1608-74)  
–*Paradise Lost, Book 1*



# Milton's Time

- Execution of Charles I (1649)
- Cromwell (-1658) and a Commonwealth
- Charles II and Restoration (1660-)
- *Paradise Lost* Published (1667)

## Introduction of the Theme, Lines 1-5, Book 1

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man

## Invoking Muse, Lines 17-26, Book 1

And chiefly thou O spirit, that dost prefer  
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first  
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread  
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss

>>Next

And mad'st it pregnant: what on me is dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support;  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.

## A Transition, Lines 27-33, Book 1

Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view  
Nor the deep tract of Hell, say first what cause  
Moved our grand parents in that happy state,  
Favored of Heav'n so highly, to fall off

>>Next

From their Creator, and transgress his will  
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?  
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

## The Cause of Man's Fall, Lines 34-49, Book 1

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile  
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived  
The mother of mankind, what time his pride  
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host  
Of rebel angles, by whose aid aspiring

>>Next

To set himself in glory above his peers,  
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,  
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim  
Against the throne and monarchy of God  
Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud

>>Next



With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power  
Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky  
With hideous ruin and combustion down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire.  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.

## Description of Hell, Lines 50-83, Book 1

Nine times the space that measures day and night  
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew  
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf  
Confounded though immortal: but his room  
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought

>>Next

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes  
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay  
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:  
At once as far as angels ken he views

## Lines 50-83, Book 1

Served only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
That comes to all; but torture without end

>>Next

Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed  
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:  
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared  
For those rebellious, here their prison ordained

>>Next

In utter darkness, and their portion set  
As far removed from God and light of Heav'n  
As from the center thrice to th' utmost pole.  
How unlike the place from whence they fell!

>>Next

## Lines 50-83, Book 1

There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed  
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,  
He soon discerns, and welt'ring by his side  
One next himself in power, and next in crime,

>>Next

Long after known in Palestine, and named  
Beëlzebub. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,  
And thence in Heav'n called Satan, with bold words  
Breaking the horrid silence thus began.



## Satan's Heroic Speech, Lines 84-124, Book 1

“If thou beest he; but O how fall'n! how changed  
From him, who in the happy realms of light  
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine  
Myriads though bright: if he whom mutual league,  
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope

>>Next

And hazard in the glorious enterprise,  
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined  
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest  
From what height fall'n, so much the stronger proved  
He with his thunder: and till then who knew

>>Next

The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,  
Nor what the potent victor in his rage  
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,  
Though changed in outward luster, that fixed mind  
And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,  
That with the mightiest raised me to contend,

>>Next

## Satan not Beaten, Lines 84-124, Book 1

And to the fierce contention brought along  
Innumerable force of Spirits armed  
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,  
His utmost power with adverse power opposed  
In dubious battle on the plains of Heav'n,

>>Next

And shook his throne, What though the field be lost?  
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,  
And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
And courage never to submit or yield:  
And what is else not to be overcome?

>>Next

That glory never shall his wrath or might  
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace  
With suppliant knee, and deify his power  
Who from the terror or this arm so late  
Doubted his empire, that were low indeed,

>>Next

## Satan's Heroic Portrayal, Lines 84-124, Book 1

That were an ignominy and shame beneath  
This downfall; since by fate the strength of gods  
And this empyreal substance cannot fail,  
Since through experience of this great event  
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,

>>Next

We may with more successful hope resolve  
To wage by force or guile eternal war  
Irreconcilable, to our grand foe,  
Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy  
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav'n."



## Epic Simile, Lines 193-208, Book 1

Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate  
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides  
Prone on the flood, extended long and large  
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge

>>Next

As whom the fables name of monstrous size,  
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,  
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den  
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast  
Leviathan, which God of all his works

>>Next

Created hugest that swim th' ocean stream:  
Him haply slumb'ring on the Norway foam  
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,  
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,

>>Next

With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind  
Moors by his side under the lee, while night  
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays:

## Addition Information on Satan

- In Book 3, Satan changes into a cherub when he meets Uriel.
- In Book 4, Satan changes his shape into a toad. He chooses Eve rather than Adam because the former is weak.

## Epic Simile (Hell), Lines 230-36, Book 1

And such appeared in hue; as when the force  
Of subterranean wind transports a hill  
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side  
Of thund'ring Etna, whose combustible

>>Next

And fueled entrails thence conceiving fire,  
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,  
And leave a singèd bottom all involved

## Acceptance of Hell, Lines 242-70, Book 1

“Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,”  
Said then the lost Archangel, “thus the seat  
That we must change for Heav’n, this mournful gloom  
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he  
Who now is sov’reign can dispose and did

>>Next



What shall be right: farthest from him is best  
Whom reason hath equaled, force hath made supreme  
Above his equals. Farewell happy fields  
Where joy for ever dwells: Hail horrors, hail  
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell

>>Next

Receive thy new possessor: one who brings  
A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.

# Hell in *Paradise Lost*

- Hell is a State of the Mind
- Hell is a Separated Place of Dark Fire
- Hell is Pandemonium

## Catalogue of the Devils, Lines 376-521

- Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
- Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
- .....
- First Moloch, horrid king besmeared with blood
- Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears
- .....

## Devils Related to Arabian Countries

- [...]. Him the Ammonite
- Worshipped in Rabba and her wat'ry plain,
- .....
- Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons
- .....
- To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.

## Devils Related to Egypt

- Osiris, Isis, Orus and their train
- With monstrous shapes and sorceries, abused
- Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek
- Their wand'ring gods disguised in brutish forms
- Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape

## Devils Related to Greece and Rome

- [...] Titan Heav'n's first born
- With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
- By younger Saturn, he from mightier Jove,
- His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
- So Jove usurping reigned [...]. [Chronos]

## Satan the Military Leader, Lines 559-71, Book 1

.... Thus they

Breathing united force with fixed thought

Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed

Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil; and now

Advanced in view they stand, a horrid front

>>Next



Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise  
Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield,  
Awaiting what command their mighty chief  
Had to impose. He through the armèd files

>>Next

Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse  
The whole battalion views, their order sue,  
Their visages and stature as of gods,  
Their number last he sums. And now his heart

## Power of the Devils, Lines 622-34, Book 1

“O myriads of immortal Spirits, O powers  
Matchless, but with th’ Almighty, and that strife  
Was not inglorious, though th’ event was dire,  
As this place testifies, and this dire change  
Hateful to utter: but what power of mind

>>Next

Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth  
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared,  
How such united force of gods, how such  
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?

>>Next

For who can yet believe, though after loss,  
That all these puissant legions, whose exile  
Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to reascend  
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?

## Hope, Lines 635-43, Book 1

For me, be witness all the host of Heav'n,  
If counsels different, or danger shunned  
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns  
Monarch in Heav'n, till then as one secure  
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,

>>Next

Consent or custom, and his regal state  
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,  
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.  
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own

## What to do Next? Lines 644-62, Book 1

So as not either to provoked, or dread  
New war, provoked; our better part remains  
To work in close design, by fraud or guile  
What force effected not: that he no less  
At length from us may find, who overcomes

>>Next



By force, hath overcome but half his foe.  
Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife  
There went a fame in Heav'n that he ere long  
Intended to create, and therein plant  
A generation, whom his choice regard

>>Next

Should favor equal to the sons of Heaven:  
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps  
Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere:  
For this infernal pit shall never hold  
Celestial Spirits in bondage, not th' abyss

>>Next

Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts  
Full counsel must mature: peace is despaired,  
Foe who can think submission? War then, war  
Open or understood must be resolved.”

## Devils' Reactions, Lines 663-66

- He spake: and to confirm his words, out flew
- Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
- Of mighty Cherubin; the sudden blaze
- Far round illumined Hell

## Building Pandemonium, Lines 710-13

- Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
- Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
- Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet
- Built like a temple [...].

## Call for Meeting, Lines 752-57

- Meanwhile the wingèd heralds by command
- Of sov'reign power, with awful ceremony
- And trumpet's sound throughout the host proclaim
- A solemn council forthwith to be held
- At Pandemonium, the high capitol
- Of Satan and his peers: their summons called

## Epic Simile (Tiny Devils), Lines 777-87, Book 1

Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed  
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons  
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room  
Throng numberless, like that Pygmean race  
Beyond the Indian mount, or fairy elves,

>>Next

Whose midnight revels, by a forest side  
Or fountain some belated peasant sees,  
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon  
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth  
Wheels her pale course: they on their mirth and dance  
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;



- John Milton:
  - Paradise Lost, Book 2*

## Seven Speeches in the Council (Book 2)

- Satan's
- Moloch's
- Belial's
- Mammon's
- Beëlzebub's
- Satan's
- Satan's

## A Scene in Hell, Lines 1-10, Book 2

High on a throne of royal state, which far  
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,  
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand  
Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,  
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised

>>Next

To that bad eminence; and from despair  
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires  
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue  
Vain war with Heav'n, and by success untaught  
His proud imaginations thus displayed.

Satan's Speech (flattery, hope, position), Lines 11-24,  
Book 2

“Powers and Dominions, deities of Heaven,  
For since no deep within her gulf can hold  
Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fall'n,  
I give not Heav'n for lost. From this descent  
Celestial Virtues rising, will appear

>>Next

More glorious and more dread than from no fall,  
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.  
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heav'n  
Did first create your leader, next, free choice,

>>Next

With what besides, in counsel or in fight,  
Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss  
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more  
Established in a safe unenvied throne  
Yielded with full consent. The happier state

## Satan's Speech (hero, position), Lines 25-34

- In Heav'n, which follows dignity, might draw
- Envy from each inferior; but who here
- Will envy whom the highest place exposes
- Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
- Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
- Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
- For which to strive, no strife can grow up there



- From faction; for none sure will claim in Hell
- Precédence, none, whose portion is so small
- Of present pain, that with ambitious mind

Satan's Speech (Satan knows God's strength), Lines  
35-42, Book 2

Will covet more. With this advantage then  
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,  
More than can be in Heav'n, we now return  
To claim our just inheritance of old,

>>Next

Surer to prosper than prosperity  
Could have assured us; and by what best way,  
Whether of open war or covert guile,  
We now debate; who can advise, may speak.”

## Moloch, Wrath, Lines 43-49

- He ceased, and next him Moloch, sceptered king
- Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
- That fought in Heav'n; now fiercer by despair:
- His trust was with th'Eternal to be deemed
- Equal in strength, and rather than be less
- Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
- Went all his fear [...].

## Moloch for War (direct), Lines 51-54

- “My sentence is for open war: of wiles,
- More unexpért, I boast not: them let those  
Contrive who need, or when they need, not new.
- For while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
- Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
- The signal to ascent, sit lingering here
- Heav’n’s fugitives, and for their dwelling place

Moloch's Speech (shame, weapon, angels' nature, no worse condition), Lines 51-105, Book 2

Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,  
The prison of his tyranny who reigns  
By delay?

.....  
Mixed with Tartarean sulfur, and strange fire,  
His own invented torments.

.....  
>>Next

Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench  
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,  
That in our proper motion we ascend  
Up to our native seat: descent and fall  
To us is adverse.

.....

>>Next

...:if there be in Hell

Fear to be worse destroyed: what can be worse

Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss,  
condemned

.....

>>Next



Moloch's Speech (death not to be feared), Lines 51-  
105, Book 2

...,happier far

Than miserable to have eternal being:

Or if our substance be indeed divine,

And cannot cease to be, we are at worst

On this side nothing; and by proof we feel

>>Next

Our power sufficient to disturb his Heav'n,  
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,  
Though inaccessible, his fatal throne:  
Which if not victory is yet revenge."

## Belial the Slothful, Lines 106-14, Book 2

He ended frowning, and his look denounced [portended]  
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous  
To less than gods. On th' other side up rose  
Belial, in act more graceful and humane;  
A fairer person lost not Heav'n; he seemed

>>Next

For dignity composed and high exploit:

But all was false and hollow; though his tongue

Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear

The better reason, to perplex and dash

## Belial's Speech (despair, God too strong), Lines 119-31, Book 2

“I should be much for open war, O Peers,  
As not behind in hate; if what was urged  
Main reason to persuade immediate war,  
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast  
Ominous conjecture on the whole success:

>>Next

When he who most excels in fact of arms,  
In what he counsels and in what excels  
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair  
And utter dissolution, as the scope

>>Next

Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.

First, what revenge? The tow'rs of Heav'n are filled

With armèd watch, that render all access

Impregnable;

Belial's Speech (intellectual delights), Lines 142-51,  
Book 2

Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope  
Is flat despair: we must exasperate  
Th' almighty victor to spend all his rage,  
And that must end us, that must be our cure,  
To be no more; sad cure; for who would lose,

>>Next



Though full of pain, this intellectual being,  
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,  
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost  
In the wide womb of uncreated night,  
Devoid of sense and motion?

Belial's Speech (possible to be in worse situation),  
Lines 168-72, Book 2

....Or when we lay  
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.  
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires  
Awaked should blow them into sevenfold rage  
And plunge us in the flames? Or from above

Belial's Speech (against force or guile), Lines 187-214,  
Book 2

War therefore, open or concealed, alike  
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile  
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye  
Views all things at one view? He from Heav'n's high  
All these our motions vain, sees and derides;

>>Next

Not more almighty to resist our might

.....

...:This is now

Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,

Our Súpreme Foe in time may much remit

>>Next

His anger, and perhaps thus far removed  
Not mind us not offending, satisfied  
With what is punished; whence these raging fires  
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames

## Mammon the Greedy, Lines 226-83

- Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
- Counseled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
- Not peace: and after him thus Mammon spake.
- "Either to disenthroned the King of Heav'n
- We war, if war be best, or to regain
- Our own right lost: him to unthroned we then
- May hope when everlasting Fate shall yield
- To fickle Chance [...].

## Freedom Better than Enslavement

- This must be our task
- In Heav'n, this our delight; how wearisome
- Eternity so spent in worship paid
- To whom we hate. Let us not then pursue
- By force impossible, by leave obtained
- Unacceptable, though in Heav'n, our state
- Of splendid vassalage, but rather seek
- Our own good from ourselves [...].

## Gems and Gold

- This desert soil
- Wants not her hidden luster, gems and gold;
- Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
- Magnificence; and what can Heav'n show more?
- Our torments also may in length of time
- Become our elements, these piercing fires
- As soft as now severe, our temper changed
- Into their temper; which must needs remove
- The sensible of pain.



## Devils Afraid, Lines 290-302, Book 2

...: such applause was heard

As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,

Advising peace: for such another field

They dreaded worse than Hell: so much the fear

Of thunder and the sword of Michaël

>>Next

Wrought still within them; and no less desire  
To found this nether empire, which might rise  
By policy, and long process of time,  
In emulation opposite to Heav'n.

>>Next

Which then Beëlzebub perceived, than whom,  
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave  
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed  
A pillar of state;

## Beëlzebub's Speech, Lines 344-80, Book 2

....What if we find  
Some easier enterprise? There is a place  
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n  
Err not) another world, the happy seat  
Of some new race called Man, about this time

>>Next

To be created like to us, though less  
In power and excellence, but favored more  
Of him who rules above; so was his will  
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath,  
That shook Heav'n's whole circumference, confirmed.

>>Next

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn  
What creatures there inhabit, of what mold,  
Or substance, how endued, and what their power,  
And where their weakness, how attempted best,

>>Next

By force or subtlety. Though Heav'n be shut,  
And Heav'n's high arbitrator sit secure  
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,

>>Next

## Lines 344-80, Book 2

The utmost border of his kingdom, left  
To their defense who hold it: here perhaps  
Some advantageous act may be achieved  
By sudden onset, either with Hell fire  
To waste his whole creation, or possess

>>Next



All as our own, and drive as we were driven,  
The puny habitants, or if not drive,  
Seduce them to our party, that their God  
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand  
Abolish his own works. This would surpass

>>Next

Common revenge, and interrupt his joy  
In our confusion, and our joy upraise  
In his disturbance; when his darling sons  
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse  
Their frail original, and faded bliss,  
Faded so soon. Advise if this be worth

>>Next

Attempting, or to sit in darkness here  
Hatching vain empires.” Thus Beëkzebub  
Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised  
By Satan, and in part proposed:

## Satan's Reply, Lines 390-415, Book 2

“Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,  
Synod of gods, and like to what ye are,  
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep  
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,  
Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view

>>Next

Of those bright confines, whence with neighboring arms  
And opportune excursion we may chance  
Re-enter Heav'n; or else in some mild zone  
Dwell not unvisited of Heav'n's fair light  
Secure, and at the bright'ning orient beam  
Purge off this gloom; the soft delicious air,

>>Next

To heal the scar of these corrosive fires  
Shall breathe her balm. But first whom shall we send  
In search of this new world, whom shall we find  
Sufficient? Who shall tempt with wand'ring feet  
The dark unbottomed infinite abyss

>>Next

And through the palpable obscure find out  
His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight  
Upborne with indefatigable wings  
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive  
The happy isle? What strength, what art can then

>>Next

Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe  
Through the strict senteries and stations thick  
Of angels watching round? Here he had need  
All circumspection, and we now no less  
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send,



## Satan Recommends Himself, Lines 430-46, Book 2

“O progeny of Heav’n, empyreal Thrones,  
With reason hath deep silence and demur  
Seized us, though undismayed: long is the way  
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light;  
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,

>>Next

Outrageous to devour, immures us round  
Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant  
Barred over us prohibit all egress.  
These passed, if any pass, the void profound  
Of unessential Night receives him next

>>Next

Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being  
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.  
If thence he scape into whatever world,  
Our unknown region, what remains him less  
Than unknown dangers and as hard escape?  
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,  
And this imperial sovranity, adorned

## Authorial Intervention, Lines 496-505, Book 2

Shame to men! Devil with devil damned  
Firm concord holds, men only disagree  
Of creatures rational, though under hope  
Of heavenly grace: and God proclaiming peace,  
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife

>>Next

Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,  
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:  
As if (which might induce us to accord)  
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,  
That day and night for his destruction wait.

## Athletes, Lines 528-30, Book 2

Part on the plain, or in the air sublime  
Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,  
As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields;

## Singers, Lines 546-51, Book 2

....Others more mild,  
Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
With notes angelical to many a harp  
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall  
By doom of battle; and complain that fate  
Free virtue should enthrall to force or chance.

## Philosophers, Lines 557-69, Book 2

Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high  
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,  
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.

>>Next



Of good and evil much they argued then,  
Of happiness and final misery,  
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame,  
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy:

>>Next

Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm  
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite  
Fallacious hope, or arm th' obdurèd breast  
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.

## Discoverers, Lines 570-76, Book 2

Another part in squadrons and gross bands,  
On bold adventure to discover wide  
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps  
Might yield then easier habitation, bend  
Four ways their flying march, along the banks  
Of four internal rivers that disgorge  
Into the burning lake their baleful streams:

## Sin, Lines 649-56, Book 2

On either side a formidable shape;  
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,  
But ended foul in many a scaly fold  
Voluminous and vast, a serpent armed  
With mortal sting: about her middle round  
A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing barked  
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung  
A hideous peal:

## Death, Lines 666-87, Book 2

....The other shape,  
If shape it might be called that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,  
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,  
For each seemed either; black it stood as night,

>>Next

Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell,  
And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his head  
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.  
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat  
The monster moving onward came as fast  
With horrid strides. Hell trembled as he strode.

>>Next

## Satan, Sin, and Death, Lines 677-87, Book 2

Th' undaunted Fiend what this might be admired,  
Admired, not feared; God and his Son except,  
Created thing naught valued he nor shunned;  
And with disdainful look thus first began.

“Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,

>>Next

That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance  
Thy miscreated front athwart my way  
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,  
That be assure, without leave asked of thee:  
Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,  
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heav'n."



## Satan, Sin, and Death, Lines 746-58, Book 2

T' whom thus the portress of Hell gate replied:

“Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem

Now in thine eye so foul, once deemed so fair

In Heav'n, when at th' assembly, and in sight

Of all the Seraphim with thee combined

In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's king,

>>Next

All on a sudden miserable pain  
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum  
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast  
Threw forth, till on the left side op'ning wide,  
Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,  
Then shining heav'nly fair, a goddess armed  
Out of thy head I sprung: amazement sized

## Satan Talks to Chaos, Lines 975-87, Book 2

Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek  
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds  
Confine with Heav'n; or if some other place  
From your dominion won, th' Ethereal King  
Possesses lately, thither to arrove

>>Next

I travel this profound; direct my course;  
Directed, no mean recompense it brings  
To your behoof, if I that region lost,  
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce

>>Next

To her original darkness and your sway  
(Which is my present journey) and once more  
Erect the standard there of ancient Night;  
Yours be th' advantage all, mine the revenge.”

## A Bridge is Built, Lines 1021-38, Book 2

So he with difficulty and labor hard  
Moved on, with difficulty and labor he;  
But he once passed, soon after when man fell,  
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain

>>Next

Following his track, such was the will of Heav'n,  
Paved after him a broad and beaten way  
Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf  
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length

# Question 1

- Satan is very probably the hero in *Paradise Lost*. Can you analyze him as a character?



## Question 2

- Can you compare Milton's God with Satan?

## Question 3

- Is Satan admirable? Why?

## Question 4

- Satan is very persuasive. Do you find anything wrong with his logic?

# Question 5

- Satan, Sin, and Death recall the Holy Trinity (God the Father, Christ, and Holy Ghost). Can you compare them?

## Question 6

- Do you remember the epic conventions?  
In which way does *Paradise Lost* conform to those conventions?

## Question 7

- What is Hell like in *Paradise Lost*?

## Question 8

- Why does Milton personify Sin and Death?

## Question 9

- Can you characterize Beëlzebub, Moloch, Belial, and Mammon?