



The Sun Rising: John Donne B.A. I (Hons.)

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THE SUN RISING: A POEM BY JOHN DONNE

- ◉ **Title of the poem:** The Sun Rising
- ◉ **Name of the poet:** John Donne
- ◉ **School of Poetry:** Metaphysical
- ◉ **Type of poetry:** Love
- ◉ **Class:** B.A. I (English Honours)
- ◉ **Paper:** II

THE SUN RISING: SALIENT FEATURES

- ◉ a classic example of metaphysical love poetry
- ◉ dramatic and abrupt opening:
 - begins abruptly with the speaker abusing the sun by calling it “busy old fool unruly sun”.
 - The way the speaker lashes out at the sun, clearly suggests that something has been going on before the poem begins.
- ◉ colloquial tone.
- ◉ opens with a situation

THE SITUATION IS:

- ◉ lover and the mistress are lying in the bed
- ◉ the rays of the sun are getting in through the windows
- ◉ The sun light disturbs the lovers
- ◉ they grow angry.
- ◉ Hence, a note of annoyance

THE FOUR ADJECTIVES FOR THE SUN

- The speaker uses four adjectives for the Sun:
 - busie
 - old
 - Fool, and
 - unruly
- ‘busie’ ,as the sun has no respect or consideration for others - it disturbs the lovers.
- The Sun is called ‘old’ because it is ancient and thereby timeless and imperishable.

THE FOUR ADJECTIVES FOR THE SUN....

- ⦿ The sun is foolish because it has no understanding, it cannot appreciate other's difficulties. Whatever the condition, it rises usually in the east.
- ⦿ The sun is also unruly because it does not maintain discipline. It has no idea of the discipline and the decorum of love.

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATION

- ◉ the three adjectives used together have no punctuation marks - because the lover gets so much angry that he speaks in a breathless manner and as such these three adjectives have been lumped together.
- ◉ These three adjectives are supposed to intensify each other.
- ◉ There is one punctuation mark before; 'unruly sun' which is an example of paradox.

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATION

- ◉ The Sun is the supreme example of:
 - ◉ discipline,
 - ◉ regularity
 - ◉ punctuality,
 - ◉ devotion to work.
- ◉ Whatever the circumstances, it swims across the sky making its appearance in time.
- ◉ So calling sun 'unruly' - a paradoxical expression.
- ◉ It is out of anger, annoyance that the lover calls the sun unruly, foolish etc

TONE & ATTITUDE

- ◉ The lover is indignant and that is reflected in his tone.
- ◉ He rebukes the sun because it has awakened him and his lover from their sleep.
- ◉ He asks the sun why he is bothering them through windows and curtains.

SUPREMACY OF LOVE

- ◉ Love is not subject to season or time.
- ◉ He demands to know why lovers should obey time.
- ◉ He also shows his dominance over the sun
 - by calling it a “saucy pedantic wretch”
 - telling the sun to bother other people, such as late school boys and “sour prentices”,
 - telling the court-huntsmen that the king will ride and to call the country ant’s to their harvesting

SUPREMACY OF LOVE

- ◉ the poet is saying that their love is beyond season climates, days, month, hours.
- ◉ The poet challenges the sun that he is not high and mighty because the lover could eclipse him simply by closing his eyes, make the sun disappear by winking.
- ◉ If he is not doing so it is only because he does not want to lose sight of his beloved even for an instant.

SUPREMACY OF LOVE

- ◉ He then teases the sun that his beloved's eyes are so beautiful and bright that they can blind the sun.
- ◉ He compares his beloved to the spices of India and the mines.
- ◉ He tells the sun that all the spices of India and all the mines are sleeping next to him.
- ◉ The lover then goes to talk about his domination.
- ◉ Even other princes want to mimic them.

SUPREMACY OF LOVE ...

⦿ He declares that:

- that honour and silence are nothing compared to their love
- the sun is only half as happy as they are.
- the sun is old and so it should rest because its duty is to warm the world
- and since they are the world, the sun has completed its duty.

SUPREMACY OF LOVE

- ◉ Mark how the poet cleverly turns the sun's refusal to leave into a show of his generosity.
- By shinning at them the sun has centred itself upon the room of his love
- so they are the sun, the centre of the universe.

WHAT WE PERCEIVE ...

- ◉ In “The Sun Rising”, the poet celebrates the joy of true love.
- ◉ His wit and irony are not directed against the lady or the speaker, but rather against the sun for disturbing the lover’s perfect happiness.

IN STANZA ONE

- ⦿ the lover chides the sun
- ⦿ wants to know: why the sun should awaken them.
- ⦿ reminds the sun that for love, seasons, hour, days - have no meaning.

SECOND STANZA

- ◉ employs hyperbolic expressions to talk of the world being where the lovers were.
- ◉ Through hyperbole, he asks the sun to agree that his love is better than all treasure: “the India of spice and mine”.
- ◉ For, all these treasures lie with him in her person.

STANZA III & METAPHYSICAL CONCEIT

- ◉ The third stanza extends the hyperbolic comparison as the lover disposes of everything's in favour of his beloved.

She's all states, and all princes I,
Nothing else is;

- ◉ This expression is a fine example of metaphysical conceit in the poem.
- ◉ It elaborates on the lover's superiority to the physical world.

STANZA III

- ◉ In the similar metaphysical vein, the lover calls wealth “alchemy” and all honour a false show.
- ◉ There is witty reversal in the stance of the poet towards the sun.
- ◉ The poet asserts that since his beloved and their love comprise the world, and the sun’s job is to warm the world, the sun has merely to shine in on the lovers and its purpose will be done.

STANZA III

- The tone is mildly ironic, “shine here to us and thou art every where\this bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere”.
- The tone is playful and colloquial and questioning.
- The colloquial tone of the poem is another distinguishing feature.
- There is nothing pedantic, flowery about these lines. Everyday words have been used here.
- The poem is very much part of an earthly or worldly experience of human experience.

LET'S CONCLUDE

- “The Sun Rising” is a lyric poem divided into three Stanzas of ten lines each.
- Each stanza is further divided into two quatrains, respectively rhyming abba and cddc, and a couplet rhyming ee.
- This is typical poem of Donne characterised by vividness of expression, quality of conceits and freshness of approach.
- This poem also rejoices American culture through the enlightenment of the soul.

LET'S CONCLUDE

- ◉ “The Sun Rising” must not be interpreted literally - James S. Baumlin
- ◉ Donne’s displacement of the outside world, in favour of the lover inside “microcosm” is a rhetoric technique used to argue for the strength and energy of mutual love.
- ◉ This is quite manifest in the way Donne’s persona creates several binary oppositions that indicate that love exists independently from and superior to the physical world.

Thank

You!