Renaissance Poetry

by various authors from the Renaissance literary period
Literature for Units 21 - 24

About the Authors

Since we are studying many poets at once, it is worth your time to read a biography of each poet as we study them. Luminarium.org has pages of information on each of the poets and Renaissance Literature in general. **www.luminarium.org/renlit/**

Selected Poems For Units 21-24

"Whoso List to Hunt" ..... Sir Thomas Wyatt
Sonnets 30 and 75 ..... Edmund Spenser
"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" ..... Christopher Marlowe
"The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" ..... Sir Walter Raleigh
"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" ..... John Donne
"To His Coy Mistress" ..... Andrew Marvell
Introduction to "Paradise Lost" ..... John Milton

- In this section, you will write an explication for one of the poems studied each week. If you are studying this text in a classroom setting, it is a good idea to study the reading material before the class discussion, preparing to analyze the poem as a group.
- Bookmark this as you will use the information found here to write an explication for one of the sonnets studied each week:
  writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/poetry-explications

Unit 21 – Authors & Their Poems

"Noli me tangere"
— Sir Thomas Wyatt

Sir Thomas Wyatt **www.luminarium.org/renlit/wyatt.htm**
"Whoso List to Hunt" ..... Sir Thomas Wyatt

Edmund Spenser www.**luminarium.org/renlit/spenser.htm**
Sonnets 30 and 75 ..... Edmund Spenser

Unit 21 Assignments

Literature

- Using the links above or other sources, find information on the poets and write a three-paragraph author profile on the two poets highlighted this week: **Wyatt** and **Spenser**.
- Read the poems by Wyatt and Spenser in Unit 21 – Assignment Background. For each poem, follow these instructions:
  - First, read the poem silently. Be sure to identify unfamiliar words and learn their meanings.
  - Then read the poem aloud.
  - Next, think about the poem as a story where the speaker is addressing an audience or another character. (Do not assume that the poet is the speaker.) Write in your notebook a description of the speaker's voice, the noted conflict or ideas of the poem, and the language the poet uses to express these conflicts or ideas.
  - Write the details about the poem:

    Rhyme Scheme: note the rhyme scheme of the poem by assigning letters to rhyming words.

    Form: In what form is the poem written (sonnet, ballad, free verse)? Does it vary from the traditional form? What does it add to the poem? (What tone does it create?)

    Rhetoric: How does the speaker reveal his ideas?
  - Visit this site for more information on rhyme scheme, form, and rhetoric: **https://www.msu.edu/course/eng/310a/snapshot.afs/tavrmina/SS97/310h6.htm**
  - If it is a sonnet, what does the rhyming couplet signify – what message does the poet want the reader to hear?

Composition

Write an explication for one of the poems studied. Use the information found at this website: **writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/poetry-explications/**

Be sure to include:

- the idea presented in the octave.
- the conclusion presented in the sextet.
- the final thought in the couplet.

Unit 21 – Assignment Background

Sonnets

Adapted for High School from *An Introduction to Poetry*
by Jay B. Hubbell, Ph.D. and John O. Beaty, Ph.D.

The most famous of all the fixed forms is the sonnet, great examples of which are found in Italian, French, German, and other modern languages as well as English. The sonnet was a product of the early Italian Renaissance – a period when the crafts of the goldsmith, the painter, and the poet were plied with equal care and skill. It was introduced into England in the sixteenth century by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and at once attained remarkable vogue. Shakespeare, Spenser, and Sidney, as well as a number of minor Elizabethan poets, wrote sonnet sequences.

In poetry written in English there are, in order of importance, three main types of the sonnet: the *Italian*, the *Shakespearean*, and the *Spenserian*. The Italian, or Petrarchan, receives its name from the fact that it was used by Petrarch and other Italian poets. Each of the other two types takes its name from the most illustrious English poets who early made an extended use of it.

The Italian sonnet consists of fourteen iambic pentameter lines. The first eight lines form the *octave*, which rhymes *abbaabba*; the remaining six lines, riming *cdecde*, constitute the sextet. The two parts of the Italian sonnet have more than a stanzaic (an arrangement of a certain number of lines forming a division of a poem) significance. The thought is always cast in a certain form. The octave presents a thought, question, or problem, which the sextet completes appropriately.

The point of division is not always coincidental with the passing from octave to sextet. The thought of the octave frequently, in fact, runs over into the first half of the next line. In poorly constructed sonnets the distinction between sextet and octave is not strictly maintained. In all regular sonnets of the Italian type the rhyme scheme of the octave is *abbaabba*; in the sextet, however, great latitude in rhyme is allowed, sometimes following the *cdcdcd* rhyme scheme.

Although Italian is regarded as the standard sonnet, the other types, particularly the Shakespearean, are vehicles for some superb poems. The Shakespearean sonnet does not afford the symphonic effect of the Italian, but its heroic quatrains produce a sweeping movement, and the concluding heroic couplet often gives to the thought an effective epigrammatic turn. The rhyme scheme of the three quatrains and the couplet is *abab cdcd efef gg*. Shakespeare's one hundred and fifty-four sonnets constitute a sequence unparalleled for sustained power and beauty.

The Spenserian sonnet differs from the Shakespearean only in that the quatrains are interlocked by rhyme, the scheme being *abab bcbc cdcd ee*.

The Lover Despairing to Attain
("Whoso List to Hunt," by Sir Thomas Wyatt)

Whoso list to hunt? I know where is an hind!
But as for me, alas! I may no more,
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore;
I am of them that furtherest com behind.
Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
Draw from the deer; but as she fleeth afore
Fainting I follow; I leave off therefore,
Since in a net I seek to hold the wind.

Who list to hunt, I put him out of doubt
As well as I, may spend his time in vain!
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written her fair neck round about;
"*Noli me tangere*[1]*;* for Caesar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame."

Notes

Adapted for High School from *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 3
Edited by A.W. Ward, Litt.D. and A.R. Waller, M.A.

Wyatt's chief instrument was the sonnet, a form which he was the first English writer to use. Of all forms, the sonnet is that in which it is most difficult to be obscure, turgid, or irregular. Its small size and precise structure force on the writer compression, point and intensity, for a feeble sonnet proclaims itself feeble at a glance. His model – in thought, and, up to a certain point, in form– was the sonnet of Petrarch, of whom he was a close student.

Wyatt's sonnets number about thirty: ten of them are translations of Petrarch, and two others owe a debt to the same author. But either he did not apprehend, or he deliberately decided not to imitate, the strict Petrarchian form; and the great majority of the English sonneteers before Milton followed his example. The main difference is this: that, whereas the sextet of the strict Petrarchian sonnet never ends with a couplet, the sonnets of Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Elizabethan sonnets in general, nearly always do. The effect produced, that of a forcible ending, is opposed to the strict principles of the sonnet, which should rise to its fullest height at the conclusion of the octave, to sink to rest gradually in the sextet. But the final couplet has been used so freely and to such noble ends by English writers that objection is out of place.

Of Wyatt's sonnets, two or three do actually, by their sense, fall into two divisions of seven lines; but it is plain that this was not the principle on which he constructed his sonnets. For the most part, the separation of octave and sextet is clearly marked, and the rhymes of the former are arranged in Petrarchian fashion, *abbaabba*, with occasional variations, of which *abbaacca* is not uncommon form.

Following Petrarch, Wyatt sang, in his love-poetry, almost exclusively of his own sufferings at the cruelty, much more rarely of his own joy in the kindness of his mistress. To say that many of the sonnets are translations and, therefore, cannot represent the actual feelings of the translator, is to question the sincerity of almost every Elizabethan sonneteer.

Sonnets 30 and 75

Edmund Spenser

My Love is Like to Ice

My love is like to ice, and I to fire:
How comes it then that this her cold so great
Is not dissolved through my so hot desire,
But harder grows the more I her entreat?
Or how comes it that my exceeding heat
Is not allayed by her heart-frozen cold,
But that I burn much more in boiling sweat,
And feel my flames augmented manifold?
What more miraculous thing may be told,

Sonnet 75

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.
"Vayne man," sayd she, "that doest in vaine assay.
A mortall thing so to immortalize,
For I my selve shall lyke to this decay,

That fire, which all things melts, should harden ice,
And ice, which is congeal'd with senseless cold,
Should kindle fire by wonderful device?
Such is the power of love in gentle mind,
That it can alter all the course of kind.

And eek my name bee wyped out lykewize."
"Not so," quod I, "let baser things devize,
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens wryte your glorious name.
Where whenas death shall all the world subdew,
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

Did you make sense of all the old English spelling in Sonnet 75? If so, read it here:
http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45189

The Spenserian Sonnet

Adapted for High School from *The Elements of English Versification*
by James Wilson Bright, Ph.D., Litt.D. and Raymond Durbin Miller, Ph.D.

The sonnet employed by Spenser in his Amoretti[1] embodies some of the characteristics of both Italian and English forms. As in the Italian sonnet, the first two quatrains are linked together by a common rhyme; as in the English sonnet, the concluding six verses are divided into a quatrain and a couplet; but since the third quatrain is linked by a common rhyme to the preceding two, there is not distinct division into octave and sextet.

1. The Amoretti (meaning little love poems) is a sequence of 89 sonnets written in the tradition of the Petrarchan sonnets, a popular form for poets of the Renaissance period. (LibriVox.org)

Unit 22 – Authors & Their Poems

"A cap of flower, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle"
— Christopher Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe **www.luminarium.org/renlit/marlowe.htm**
"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" ..... Christopher Marlowe

Sir Walter Raleigh **www.luminarium.org/renlit/ralegh.htm**
"The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" ..... Sir Walter Raleigh

Unit 22 – Assignments

Literature

- Using the links above or other sources, find information on the poets and write a three-paragraph author profile on the two poets highlighted this week**:** **Marlowe** and **Raleigh**.
- Read the poems by Marlowe and Raleigh in Unit 22 – Assignment Background. For each poem, follow these instructions:
  - First, read the poem silently. Be sure to identify unfamiliar words and learn their meanings.
  - Read the poem aloud.
  - Next, think about the poem as a story where the speaker is addressing an audience or another character. (Do not assume that the poet is the speaker.) Write in your notebook a description of the speaker's voice, the noted conflict or ideas of the poem, and the language the poet uses to express these conflicts or ideas.
  - Write the details about the poem:

    Rhyme Scheme: note the rhyme scheme of the poem by assigning letters to rhyming words.

    Form: In what form is the poem written (sonnet, ballad, free verse)? Does it vary from the traditional form? What does it add to the poem? (What tone does it create?)

    Rhetoric: How does the speaker reveal his ideas?

    Visit this site for more information on rhyme scheme, form, and rhetoric: **https://www.msu.edu/course/eng/310a/snapshot.afs/tavrmina/SS97/310h6.htm**

Composition

- Write an explication for one of the poems studied. Use the information found at this website: **writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/poetry-explications/**
  Be sure to include:
  - the overall idea presented by the poem
  - the characteristics of the type the poem illustrates

Unit 22 – Assignment Background

Pastoral Lyrics

Adapted for High School from *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama*
by Walter Wilson Greg

The great charm of pastoral poetry arises from the view which it exhibits of the tranquility and happiness of a rural life. This pleasing allusion, therefore, the poet must carefully maintain. Let him paint its simplicity and innocence to the full; but cover its rudeness and misery. But let him take care that in embellishing nature, he does not altogether disguise her; or pretend to join with rural simplicity and happiness, such improvements as are unnatural and foreign to it. If it not be real life which he

presents to us, it must, however, somewhat resemble it. In order to examine it more particularly, let us consider, first, the scenery; next, the characters; and lastly, the subjects and actions, which this sort of composition should exhibit.

As to the scene, it is clear, that it must always to be laid in the country, and much of the poet's merit depends on describing it beautifully. In every pastoral – a scene or rural prospect – should be distinctly drawn, and set before us. It is not enough that we have those unmeaning groups of violets and roses, of birds, and brooks, and breezes, which our common pastoral-mongers throw together. A good poet ought to give us such a landscape, as a painter could copy after. A single object, happily introduced, will sometimes distinguish and characterize a whole scene. He must diversify his face of nature, by presenting to us new images. It is also incumbent on him to suit the scenery to the subject of the pastoral; and, according as it is a pleasant or melancholy kind, to exhibit nature under such forms as may correspond with the emotions or sentiments which he describes.

With regard to the characters, or persons which are proper to be introduced into pastorals, it is not enough that they be persons residing in the country. The adventures or discourses of courtiers, or citizens, in the country, are not what we look for in such writings; we expect to be entertained by shepherds, or persons wholly engaged in rural occupations; whose innocence and freedom from the cares of the world may, in our imagination, form an agreeable contrast with the manners and characters of those who are engaged in the bustle of life.

One of the principal difficulties which here occurs has been already hinted; that of keeping the exact medium between too much rusticity on the one hand, and too much refinement on the other. The shepherd, assuredly, must be plain and unaffected in his manner of thinking, on all subject. An amiable simplicity must be the groundwork of his character. At the same time, there is no necessity for his being dull and insipid. Rural personages are supposed to speak the language of plain sense, and natural feelings.

Supposing the poet to have formed correct ideas concerning his pastoral characters and personages: the next inquiry is about what is he to employ them? For it is not enough that he gives us shepherds discoursing together. Every good poem, of every kind, ought to have a subject which should, in some way, interest us. The active scenes of country life either are, or to most describers appear to be, too barren of incidents. From the first lines, we can generally guess at all that is to follow. It is either a shepherd who sits down solitary by a brook to lament the absence or cruelty of his mistress, and to tell us how the trees wither and the flowers droop now that she is gone; or we have two shepherds who challenge one another to sing, rehearsing alternate verses, which have little either meaning or subject, till the judge rewards one with a studded crook, and another with a beechen bowl.

The modern writers of pastoral have, generally, contented themselves with copying or imitating the descriptions and sentiments of the ancient poets. The ancient poets were the writers of the Greek idylls, from which the Renaissance pastorals were fashioned.

The Poems

In 1599, Christophe Marlowe wrote his pastoral, titled "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love." His poem contains the conventions of pastoral poetry: the scene-descriptions of nature showing the pleasures and joys of nature, hiding the difficulties found in life; the character – a shepherd, carefree, describing an easy life if his love would join him; etc.

In response to this poem and idyllic setting, Sir Walter Raleigh wrote an almost line-by-line response from the mistress's point of view. In his poem, Raleigh is refuting the claims of the shepherd. Using those same conventions of pastoral poetry, Raleigh exposes the failure of pastorals to describe the hardships and the realities of life.

"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"
by Marlowe

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields
Woods or steepy mountain yields

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flower, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

"The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"
by Raleigh

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy bed of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,
Had joys no date nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Unit 23 – Authors & Their Poems

"A cap of flower, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle"
— Christopher Marlowe

John Donne www.luminarium.org/renlit/donne.htm
"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" ..... John Donne

Andrew Marvell www.luminarium.org/renlit/marvell.htm
"To His Coy Mistress" ..... Andrew Marvell

Unit 23 – Assignments

Literature

- Using the links above or other sources, find information on the poets and write a three-paragraph author profile on the two poets highlighted this week: **Donne** and **Marvell**.
- Read the poems by Donne and Marvell in Unit 23 – Assignment Background. For each poem, follow these instructions:
  - First, read the poem silently. Be sure to identify unfamiliar words and learn their meanings.
  - Read the poem aloud.
  - Next, think about the poem as a story where the speaker is addressing an audience or another character. (Do not assume that the poet is the speaker.) Write in your notebook a description of the speaker's voice, the noted conflict or ideas of the poem, and the language the poet uses to express these conflicts or ideas.
  - Write the details about the poem:
    Rhyme Scheme: note the rhyme scheme of the poem by assigning letters to rhyming words.
    Form: In what form is the poem written (sonnet, ballad, free verse)? Does it vary from the traditional form? What does it add to the poem? (What tone does it create?)
    Rhetoric: How does the speaker reveal his ideas?

    Visit this site for more information on rhyme scheme, form, and rhetoric: **https://www.msu.edu/course/eng/310a/snapshot.afs/tavrmina/SS97/310h6.htm**
- Using your knowledge of poems from the lesson, give the overall idea presented by the poem.
- Use the information found at this website to write an explication on one of the sonnets studied this week: **http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/poetry-explications/**

Composition

- For this unit, you will end with writing an explication for one of the poems studied. For information about writing an explication, see the Formats and Models section and visit this site (you will notice similar information): **writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/poetry-explications/**.

Be sure to include:

- the concrete (tangible) images that make the poem "metaphysical."
- the speaker's view of love. (For example: Is it true and giving? Or is it lustful and selfish?)

Unit 23 – Assignment Background

Metaphysical Poetry

Excerpt adapted for High School from "The Metaphysical Poets" by T.S. Elliot, published in *Times Literary Supplement*.

In the case of 'metaphysical poetry,' the phrase has long done duty as a term of abuse, or as the label of a quaint and pleasant taste. The question is to what extent the so-called metaphysicals formed a school (in our own time we should say a 'movement'), and how far this so-called school or movement is a digression from the main current. Not only is it extremely difficult to define metaphysical poetry, but difficult to decide which poets practice it and in which of their verses. The poetry of Donne (to whom Marvell and Bishop King are sometimes nearer than any of the other authors) is late Elizabethan, its feeling often very close to that of Chapman.

It is difficult to find any precise use of metaphor, simile, or other conceit, which is common to all the poets and at the same time important enough as an element of style to isolate these poets as a group. Donne, and often Cowley, employ a device which is sometimes considered characteristically 'metaphysical'; the elaboration (contrasted with the condensation) of a figure of speech to the furthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it. Thus Cowley develops the commonplace comparison of the world to a chess-board through long stanzas ("To Destiny"), and Donne, with more grace, in "A Valediction," the comparison of two lovers to a pair of compasses. But elsewhere we find, instead of the mere explication of the content of a comparison, a development by rapid association of thought which requires considerable agility on the part of the reader.

On a round ball
A workeman that hath
copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afrique, and an
Asia,
And quickly make that,
which was nothing, All,
So cloth each teare,
Which thee cloth weare,
A globe, yea world by that
impression grow,
Till thy tears mixt with mine
doe overflow
This world, by waters sent
from thee, my heaven
dissolved so.
("A Valediction of Weeping," Donne)

Here we find at least two connections which are not implicit in the first figure, but are forced upon it by the poet: from the geographer's globe to the tear, and the tear to the deluge. On the other hand, some of

Donne's most successful and characteristic effects are secured by brief words and sudden contrasts:

A bracelet of bright hair
about the bone,
("The Relic," Donne)

where the most powerful effect is produced by the sudden contrast of associations of 'bright hair' and of 'bone'. This telescoping of images and multiplied associations is characteristic of the phrase of some of the dramatists of the period which Donne knew: not to mention Shakespeare, it is frequent in Middleton, Webster, and Tourneur, and is one of the sources of the vitality of their language. Johnson, who employed the term 'metaphysical poets', apparently having Donne, Cleveland, and Cowley chiefly in mind, remarks of them that 'the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together'. The force of this impeachment lies in the failure of the conjunction, the fact that often the ideas are yoked but not united; and if we are to judge of styles of poetry by their abuse, enough examples may be found in Cleveland to justify Johnson's condemnation. But a degree of heterogeneity of material compelled into unity by the operation of the poet's mind is omnipresent in poetry.

We doubt whether, in the eighteenth century, could be found two poems in nominally the same meter, so dissimilar as Marvell's "Coy Mistress" and Crashaw's "Saint Teresa"; the one producing an effect of great speed by the use of short syllables, and the other an ecclesiastical solemnity by the use of long ones:

Love thou art absolute sole
lord
Of life and death.

If so shrewd and sensitive (though so limited) a critic as Johnson failed to define metaphysical poetry by its faults, it is worthwhile to inquire whether we may not have more success by adopting the opposite method: by assuming that the poets of the seventeenth century (up to the Revolution) were the direct and normal development of the precedent age; and, without prejudicing their case by the adjective 'metaphysical', consider whether their virtue was not something permanently valuable, which subsequently disappeared, but ought not to have disappeared. Johnson has hit, perhaps by accident, on one of their peculiarities, when he observed that 'their attempts were always analytic'; he would not agree that, after the dissociation, they put the material together again in a new unity.

The difference is not a simple difference of degree between poets. It is something which had happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odor of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, and fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or

the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.

We may express the difference by the following theory: The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic, as their predecessors were; no less nor more than Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinicelli, or Cino. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden. Each of these men performed certain poetic functions so magnificently well that the magnitude of the effect concealed the absence of others. The language went on and in some respects improved; the best verse of Collins, Gray, Johnson, and even Goldsmith satisfies some of our fastidious demands better than that of Donne or Marvell or King. But while the language became more refined, the feeling became more crude. The feeling, the sensibility, expressed in the "Country Churchyard" (to say nothing of Tennyson and Browning) is cruder than that in the "Coy Mistress." The second effect of the influence of Milton and Dryden followed from the first, and was therefore slow in manifestation. The sentimental age began early in the eighteenth century, and continued. The poets revolted against the ratiocinative, the descriptive; they thought and felt by fits, unbalanced; they reflected.

Those who object to the 'artificiality' of Milton or Dryden sometimes tell us to 'look into our hearts and write'. But that is not looking deep enough; Racine or Donne looked into a good deal more than the heart. One must look into the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts. May we not conclude, then, that Donne, Crashaw, Vaughan, Herbert and Lord Herbert, Marvell, King, Cowley at his best, are in the direct current of English poetry, and that their faults should be reprimanded by this standard rather than coddled by antiquarian affection? They have been enough praised in terms which are implicit limitations because they are 'metaphysical' or 'witty', 'quaint' or 'obscure', though at their best they have not these attributes more than other serious poets.

A Valediction Forbidding Mourning

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,"

So let us melt, and make no noise,
  No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
  o tell the laity our love.

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

Dull sublunary lovers' love
  (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
  those things which elemented it.

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

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.

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 the other do;

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.

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

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 wingèd 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.

Unit 24 – Authors & Their Poems

"A cap of flower, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle"
— Christopher Marlowe

John Milton: **http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/milton/**
Introduction to *Paradise Lost* ..... John Milton

Unit 24 – Assignments

Literature

- Using the link above or other sources, find information on the poet and write a three-paragraph author profile on the poet highlighted this week: **Milton**.
- Read Book I of *Paradise Lost*. First, read silently, then read aloud.

Composition

- The essay below emphasizes Milton's in-depth knowledge of classic literature and Scripture. Using examples from Book I of *Paradise Lost,* respond to the following statement from the essay:

> *We must indeed recognize in Milton's style the impress of four great influences – these being the Bible, the classics, the Italian poets, and English literature. Of the Bible he possessed a knowledge such as few have had. There are hundreds of allusions to it: the words of Scripture underlie some part of the text of every page of Paradise Lost; and apart from verbal reminiscences there is much of the spirit that pervades that noblest achievement of the English tongue. Scarcely less powerful was the influence of the classics. Milton's allusiveness extends over the whole empire of classical humanity and letters, and to the scholar his work is full of the exquisite charm of endless reference to the noblest things that the ancients have thought and said. That he was deeply versed in Italian poetry the labors of his early editors have abundantly proved; and their comparative studies are confirmed by the frequent mention of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto and others in his prose works and correspondence. In English literature I imagine that he had read everything worth reading.*

- Based on the format notes you gathered from our *Beowulf* unit, write a short essay (500 words) defending or arguing against this statement. Use quotes from the poem and from your notes to defend your position.

Information on *Paradise Lost*

Excerpts adapted for High School from *Paradise Lost*
by John Milton, Wilson Verity

There has been much discussion about the "sources" of *Paradise Lost*, and writers well-nigh as countless as Vallombrosa's autumn leaves have been thrust forth from their obscurity to claim the honor of having "inspired" the great epic. Most of these unconscious claimants were, like enough, unknown to Milton; and out of the motley, many-tongued throng, Mr. Mark Pattison thinks it worthwhile – perhaps as a concession to tradition – to mention but three.

First comes the Italian poet Giovanni-Battista Andreini Voltaire, in his Essai sur la Poesi Epique written in 1727, related that Milton, during his residence at Florence in 1628 -9, saw "a comedy called Adamo. The subject of the play was the Fall of Man: the actors, the Devils, the Angels, Adam, Eve, the Serpent, Death and the Seven Mortal Sins . . . Milton pierced through the absurdity of that performance to the hidden majesty of the subject; which, being altogether unfit for stage, yet might be, for the genius of Milton, and his only, the foundation of an epic poem." What authority he had for this legend Voltaire did not say. It is not alluded to by any of Milton's contemporary biographers. We have only this random remark by Voltaire, unsupported by a scrap of satisfactory external evidence, and not substantiated by any striking internal resemblance between the Adamo and Paradise Lost.

The second claimant is the Dutch poet, Joost van den Vondel. He was a contemporary with Milton, and the author of a great number of works. Among them were several dramas on Scriptural subjects. With three of them Milton is supposed by some writers to have been acquainted. These are Lucifer (1654), a drama on the revolt of the angels and their fall from heaven; John the Messenger (1662), and Adam in Banishment (1664). In a work published a few years since it was contended that Milton borrowed a good deal from these three poems – a view from which I beg leave to dissent. It is unsupported by a shred of external testimony, and is intrinsically unlikely. Milton had some knowledge of the Dutch language, but it will be observed that the earliest of the poems with which he is thought to have been too conversant, namely Lucifer, was not published till after his blindness, while by the time that the last of them, Adam in Banishment, appeared, Paradise Lost was almost completed.

There remains the so-called Caedmon Paraphrase. In the Bodleian is the manuscript of an Old English metrical Paraphrase of parts of the Old Testament. This work was long attributed to the Northumbrian religious writer Caedmon, of whom Bede speaks. Milton never saw Paraphrase in print, for the same reason that he never saw Vondel's *Lucifer*.

We must indeed recognize in Milton's style the impress of four great influences – these being the Bible, the classics, the Italian poets, and English literature. Of the Bible he possessed a knowledge such as few have had. There are hundreds of allusions to it: the words of Scripture underlie some part

of the text of every page of Paradise Lost; and apart from verbal reminiscences there is much of the spirit that pervades that noblest achievement of the English tongue. Scarcely less powerful was the influence of the classics. Milton's allusiveness extends over the whole empire of classical humanity and letters, and to the scholar his work is full of the exquisite charm of endless reference to the noblest things that the ancients have thought and said. That he was deeply versed in Italian poetry the labors of his early editors have abundantly proved; and their comparative studies are confirmed by the frequent mention of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto and others in his prose works and correspondence. In English literature I imagine that he had read everything worth reading. Without a doubt, he was most affected by "our admired Spenser." He was, says Dryden, "the poetical son of Spenser. Milton has acknowledged to me that Spenser was his original." And there was a Spenserian school of poets, mostly Cambridge men, and some of them contemporary with Milton at the University, with whose work he evidently had considerable acquaintance.