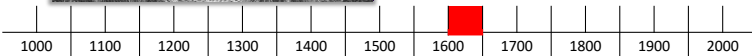


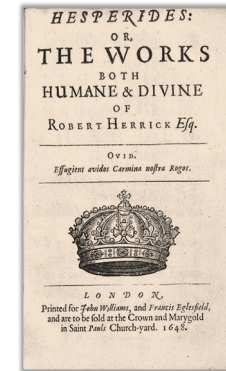
Robert Herrick (1591-1674)



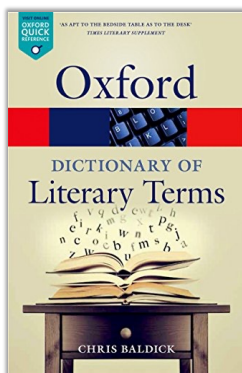
- born in London to a goldsmith
- educated at Cambridge where he consorted with Jonson's "tribe"
- ordained in 1623 and served as vicar of Dean Prior in Devonshire
- published one book of poetry, *Hesperides* (1648), containing 1,400 short poems, several on love and *carpe diem*, others on devotional topics
- influenced by Jonson as well as by Classical poets (NAEL B1219)



Robert Herrick (1591-1674)



Cavalier poets



- term applied to a group of English lyric poets of the 17th C
- derived from the popular designation for supporters of King Charles during the Civil War
- include Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, Robert Herrick, Sir John Suckling, and others
- noted for their elegantly witty short lyric poems, usually on love
- influenced by Ben Jonson in avoiding the sonnet form (Baldick 54)

lyric

some lyric poetry types

- **sonnet**: 14-line poem in iambic pentameter on love (338-39)
- **ode**: formal, ceremonious address to person, entity (257)
- **elegy**: lamentation of a death of a friend or public figure (112-13)
- **haiku**: encapsulated impression of an object or scene (159)
- **hymn**: song of praise to a venerated person or thing (171)
- **occasional poem**: poem for a special occasion, event (256)
- any fairly short, songlike poem expressing the personal mood, feeling, or meditation of a single speaker (who may be the poet or an invented character)
- in ancient Greek writing, a song for accompaniment on the lyre, perhaps sung by the chorus
- the most extensive category of verse, after narrative and dramatic
- can be in any metre and on any subject, but usually on love or grief (Baldick 206-07)

**common metre**

x / x / x / x /
 a Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)

x / x / x /
 b That sav'd a wretch like me!

x / x / x / x /
 a I once was lost, but now am found,

x / x / x /
 b Was blind, but now I see.

—John Newton, “Amazing Grace” (1779)

- sometimes referred to as *common measure*
- also known as *hymnal stanza*, a form of verse quatrain often used in traditional hymns
- like *ballad metre*, its first and third lines have four stresses, and its second and fourth lines have three stresses, but is more regularly iambic than ballad metre
- usually features an *abcb* or *abab* rhyme scheme (Baldick 69-70)

Herrick, “To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time” (1648)

x / x / x / x /
 a Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,

x / x / x /
 b Old time is still a-flying;

x / x / x /
 a And this same flower that smiles
 x /
 today,

x / x / x /
 b Tomorrow will be dying. (1-4)

Latin motifs

- ▶ *carpe diem* (Horace, *Odes*) “seize the day”
- ▶ *tempus fugit* (Virgil, *Georgics*) “time flies”
- ▶ *memento mori* (Plato, *Phaedo*) “remember you must die”

carpe diem

Tu ne quaesieris (scire nefas) quem mihi, quem tibi finem di dederint... Dum loquimur, fugerit invida aetas: **carpe diem**, quam minimum credula postero. (1.11)

—Horace, *Odes* (23 BCE)

You should not ask—to know is a sin—which end the gods have given to me, or to you.... While we talk, envious time will have fled:

pluck the day, trusting as little as possible in the next one.

- a quotation from Horace’s *Odes* meaning “seize the day,” to make the best of the present moment
- a common motif in European lyric poetry in which the speaker argues (usually to a hesitant virgin) that, since life is short, pleasure should be enjoyed while there is still time
- famous examples include Herrick’s “To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time” (1648) and Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” (1681) (Baldick 52-53)

Herrick, “Corinna’s Going A-Maying” (1648)

Come, let us go while we are in our prime,
 And take the harmless folly of the time.

We shall grow old, apace, and die
 Before we know our liberty.

Our life is short, and our days run
 As fast away as does the sun... (57-71)

Latin motifs

- ▶ *carpe diem* (Horace, *Odes*) “seize the day”
- ▶ *memento mori* (Plato, *Phaedo*) “remember you must die”
- ▶ *tempus fugit* (Virgil, *Georgics*) “time flies”

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