Love (III)

POEM TEXT

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lacked anything.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat.
So I did sit and eat.

SUMMARY

Love welcomed me, but my soul shrank away; I felt guilty about my failings and sins. But watchful Love, noticing that I was drawing back from the moment I entered, came nearer to me and asked if I needed anything.

I told Love that all I needed was a guest who deserved to be here. Love replied, "That's you." I said: "Unkind, ungrateful me? Oh, my dear, I can't possibly look you in the face." Love held my hand, smiled, and replied: "Who do you think made your eyes, but me?"

"Yes, God," I said, "but I've spoiled them. You should send me away, it's all I deserve." "But don't you know," asked Love, "who paid for your sins already? Because of that atonement, dear one, I *will* care for you. You must sit down at the table and feast with me." So I sat down and ate.

THEMES

GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

In "Love (III)," a remorseful soul feels too ashamed of all his sins to enter God's house. The welcoming God, however, points out that whatever failings weigh on the soul's conscience, they've all been paid for already: Christ "bore the blame" for all humanity's crimes, and now everyone is welcome to feast at God's table. This deceptively simple poem, the last in *The Temple* (George Herbert's important collection of Christian verse), explores how astonishingly loving and forgiving God is: difficult though it is for humanity to understand, the speaker suggests, God really does forgive people for the ugliest of sins.

When the poem begins, the time has come for the poem's speaker, a remorseful "soul" to enter God's house—a house which might suggest either a church or heaven itself, though in this poem it takes on the humble shape of a tavern where a feast is being served. Feeling "guilty of dust and sin," ashamed of his lowliness and his failings, the speaker hangs back, certain there's no way that he could be "worthy" of a place at God's table. Being a mortal human being with a conscience, these images suggest, means being all too painfully aware of how small, imperfect, and sinful you are.

None of that matters to a loving God, however—whom the speaker even names "Love" here. God ushers the speaker to the table like a friendly innkeeper, reminding him of two important points: God *made* the speaker and wants him around, and Christ "bore the blame" already for whatever sins the speaker is worried about, atoning for humanity's crimes through the Crucifixion. In other words, nothing the speaker has done is unforgivable or unforgiven, and God loves the speaker as he is. The speaker has no excuse, then, not to come on in and share God's dinner (which might represent both taking communion on earth and directly communing with God in heaven).

The very simplicity of this story communicates what the speaker finds so awe-inspiring (and difficult!) about Christian faith: wrapping your head around the abundance of God's love means believing in a forgiveness that sounds too easy to be true. Being forgiven for your sins, in this speaker's view, really is as straightforward as accepting that God not only *can* forgive you but *longs* to forgive you—an idea is so unlike the way people feel about themselves and each other that it takes a leap of faith to believe it. Luckily, the speaker suggests, God is there to help with that leap, too.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-18

LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS

LINES 1-6

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lacked anything.

"Love (III)," as its title suggests, is the third poem on love in George Herbert's collection of Christian verse, *The Temple*. It's also the last poem in that book and can be taken, in some sense, as Herbert's final word on the matter. The love in question here isn't romantic love, but divine love: God's love for humanity, and for one anxious soul in particular.

That poor soul, the speaker himself, first appears standing at God's front door. But he's simply too ashamed to come in. Though God, in the form of Love personified, cheerily welcomes him, he shrinks away, feeling "guilty of dust and sin": in other words, on God's threshold, he's painfully aware of his own grimy mortal failings. Being this close to Love itself seems to have made him self-conscious.

God, "quick-eyed," notices the speaker's hesitation, and greets him, "sweetly" asking "if I lacked anything." To a modern reader, this question just sounds makes God sound friendly, like a good host. To Herbert, these words would also suggest something more specific: "What do you lack?" is what a 17th-century bartender would ask a customer, something in the vein of "What can I get you?" In these lines, God appears as a kindly innkeeper, practically wiping their hands on their apron as they check on their nervous guest.

Right from the start, then, the poem layers gentle humor on top of awe (a classic Herbert move). The speaker, encountering God face to face, finds himself horribly aware of the stains on his own soul. But this momentous encounter happens in the earthliest of contexts.

As is often the case in Herbert, the poem's shape reflects its emotion:

- The poem's meter alternates between long lines of iambic pentameter (that is, lines of five iambs, metrical feet with a da-DUM rhythm: "Love bade | me wel- | come: yet | my soul | drew back") and short lines of iambic trimeter (just three iambs: "Who made | the eyes | but I?").
- The lines thus move like the relationship the poem describes: God reaches out to welcome the speaker, the speaker shrinks away in shame.
- The rhyme scheme works similarly: in each sestet (or six-line stanza), a dithery alternating ABAB pattern resolves in a firm CC couplet, just as God replies to the speaker's hesitance with a firm welcome.

The poem's music makes meaning, too. Listen to the echoing sounds in the first lines:

> Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
> Guilty of dust and sin.

The alliterative and assonant chime between "bade" (pronounced *bad*) and "back" again meets God's welcome with the speaker's reluctance. And the sibilant /s/ running through "soul," "dust," and "sin" links the speaker's soul with all that he feels stains it.

Those stains don't matter to the innkeeper Love, though. This will be a poem about a God whose love and forgiveness are so far and beyond human capacities that they boggle the mind of even the most fervent believer.

LINES 7-12

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

God has just asked the speaker whether he needs anything—a drink perhaps, a snack? The speaker, shamefaced, replies that the only thing he's missing is a worthy guest. In other words, knowing what he knows about the state of his own soul, he feels utterly undeserving of God's welcome.

God's amused, kindly response plays on the speaker's own words:

> A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
> Love said, You shall be he.

The echoing "be here" and "be he" underscore God's point: the speaker doesn't need to be any different to be worthy of a place under God's roof.

The speaker is having none of it, though. He knows only too well how "unkind, ungrateful" he's been. That choice of words stresses his failures: he *knows* he should have been kind and grateful, but he's certain he's fallen short of the mark on both those ideals. (If he'd just said he'd been mean and selfish, the idea of goodness wouldn't seem so painfully close.) He's so ashamed that he doesn't feel he can look God in the face:

> I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
> I cannot look on thee.

These passionate words make it clear that the speaker isn't cowering before God because he's afraid he's going to get smote: the *fear* of God or the *wrath* of God aren't at issue here. The problem is that he *loves* God so, with the kind of intimacy that overflows in terms of endearment. The speaker's failings matter so much to him because they make him feel unworthy of his beloved Love.

God's reply is just as tender:

> Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
> Who made the eyes but I?

The internal rhyme (and quiet pun) on "eye" and "I" underscores God's point. The speaker, these words insist, is God's own creation, not an accident and not an embarrassment. God's rhetorical question teasingly reminds the speaker that the great "I" of God is as close to him as his own eyes are; he *can't* get outside God's love.

This proves to be exactly the sticking point. For the mortal speaker, it's just plain difficult to imagine that God could love and forgive him in spite of his sins. God's powers of love and forgiveness are superhuman, and that makes them difficult to wrap a mortal mind around.

LINES 13-16

Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.

In spite of all God's reassurances, the speaker still can't quite accept the idea that God wants him around. Sure, he admits, God made his very eyes—but then he went and spoiled them with all his sins. Now, he says, his "shame" should "go where it doth deserve." He's pretty sure he deserves hell, in other words—and his phrasing here suggests that he feels his shame has become his very essence.

God has an answer for that, too:

> And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?

God's rhetorical question begins to sound rather like a catechism, a series of call-and-response questions with which Christians learn the doctrines of their religion. God refers here to the idea of the Atonement, which holds that Christ's crucifixion washed away everyone's sins, offering universal forgiveness. In asking, *Remember who atoned already for all that shame you're so worried about?*, God draws the speaker's attention back to a fundamental Christian consolation.

In the moment after this reminder, something striking happens in the poem's language. So far, the dialogue between God and speaker has been pretty clearly marked. In spite of the lack of quotation marks (which didn't appear in the poem's first printing, though some later editors go in and add some), it's obvious who's saying what. This next line, however, could equally belong in the mouth of God or of the speaker:

> My dear, then I will serve.

- If this is the speaker talking, then he's finally giving in, admitting that God really *does* forgive him, love him, and want him around in spite of his sins. In agreeing that he "will serve," he bows to the loving will of his "dear."
- But if it's God speaking, then God is insisting: *Since I've atoned for your sins already, you must let me serve you*—again, rather in the innkeeper vein.

The richest possibility is that these words belong equally to the speaker and God. The speaker, allowing God to serve him, also allows that he's serving God.

Accepting the idea of the Christian God, the speaker realizes, means having the humility to imagine that God cares for you no matter what. Believing you're some beyond-the-pale sinner who deserves to be cast away is only a way of doubting God's awesome and infinite love.

The idea of God lovingly serving humanity also fits right in with Herbert's allusions. Herbert seems to have been thinking of a passage from the Gospel of Luke as he wrote this poem:

> Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that **he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.**

The poem's closing lines will explore the old, old image of God's presence as a glorious feast.

LINES 17-18

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat.
So I did sit and eat.

Just as in the passage from the Gospel of Luke, the innkeeper-God finally insists that the speaker "must sit down" and "taste my meat"—must sit at the table and eat dinner with everyone else. The speaker's final words are all the more powerful for their monosyllabic plainness:

> So I did sit and eat.

At last, then, the speaker has no argument left: he's forced to realize that God loves him and to leave his shame behind. It's as

simple and as wonderful as that.

The closing image of the speaker eating at God's table makes more than one allusion—and illuminates the poem's rich conceit, the extended metaphor around which this story is built.

The idea of God as the host of a banquet summons up, not just that passage from Luke, but the story of the Last Supper, the final Passover that Christ celebrated with his followers before he was crucified:

- At this meal, Christ told his disciples that the bread and wine were his body and blood. By eating and drinking, they could thus mystically mingle with him.
- This story would evolve into the Christian ritual of communion.
- Eating the body of Christ, in this story, means being swept up in God's nature physically and spiritually—an image that might make readers think back to the link between the speaker's "eyes" and the great "I" that created them.

When God invites the speaker to "taste my meat," then, that meat (which, here, just means food in general) has more than one meaning. God's inn here might equally be:

- A church (like the one where Herbert served as a priest, perhaps) where everyone is invited to take communion;
- Or heaven itself, where everyone can feast both in and on the presence of God.

The poem's conceit thus ties together three worlds: the everyday world of eating and drinking, the religious world of Christian ritual, and the transcendent world of heaven. God's infinite love, the poem passionately declares, is equally as present in all of these, and in all sinners, no matter how hard it is for those sinners to believe it.

POETIC DEVICES

CONCEIT

"Love (III)" is built around a central conceit, an extended metaphor: the image of God as an innkeeper, the host of a tavern that might equally be a church or heaven itself.

As the poem begins, the speaker enters a hall where God is serving a feast, but lingers by the door, ashamed of the "dust and sin" that stain his soul. Like a good host, "quick-eyed" God spots this anxious guest and checks in, using the language a 17th-century bartender would: asking what a customer "lacked" was that era's way of saying "What do you want?"

The gently funny image of God as a publican, wiping their hands on their apron, brings a matter of cosmic weight down to earth, insisting that God cares about every ordinary, humble life, no matter how imperfect.

The ethereal and the earthly mingle again when God tells the speaker that he "must sit down" and "taste my meat." (Note that "meat" just meant "food" in Herbert's era.) There are layers of metaphorical meaning here: the tavern meal, in this image, suggests both the ritual of communion and the "feast" of God's presence, the direct encounter with divine love that Christianity promises will come in heaven.

The poem's conceit, then, sticks a pin through three elements of human life as Herbert saw it: the everyday world of eating and drinking, the sacred world of religious ritual, and the transcendence of heaven. A bounteous, loving, forgiving, and gentle God, the poem suggests, is present in all of these places at once.

Where Conceit appears in the poem:

- **Lines 1-6:** "Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back, / Guilty of dust and sin. / But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack / From my first entrance in, / Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning, / If I lacked anything."
- **Lines 17-18:** "You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat. / So I did sit and eat."

RHETORICAL QUESTION

Through rhetorical questions, the loving God this poem depicts gently reminds the speaker of the tenets of Christian faith.

The first rhetorical question here, though, is the speaker's:

> A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
> Love said, You shall be he.
> I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
> I cannot look on thee.

Painfully aware of his own failings, the speaker wonders how on earth God could want a guy like him around. The speaker means to imply that a sinful person like him certainly couldn't be welcome at God's table. But in the poem's terms, the *actual* answer to this question is: yes, absolutely, even "the unkind, ungrateful" can be forgiven and loved.

God makes that point with a couple of rhetorical questions of their own. First, when the speaker shamefacedly says that he doesn't dare look God in the face, God replies: "Who made the eyes but I?" This gently punny question reminds the speaker that, in all his imperfection, he's God's own creation, not a mistake or a failure.

Then, when the speaker points out that he's made a mess of the life God gave him, God replies with what might almost be a catechism, a call-and-response reminder of one of the most basic principles of Christian faith:

> And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?

In other words, God reminds the speaker that Christ's death atoned for everyone's sins, no matter how dreadful. Remembering this is all the speaker needs to do to know he's forgiven.

By framing these points as questions, the poet paints God as a gentle teacher—one who, in reassuring their pupil, goodheartedly teases him a little, too.

Where Rhetorical Question appears in the poem:

- **Line 9:** "I the unkind, ungrateful?"
- **Line 12:** "Who made the eyes but I?"
- **Line 15:** "And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?"

ALLUSION

Built on allusions to Christianity's many images of sacred eating and drinking, "Love (III)" rests on a foundation of Bible verses.

The main conceit here—God as the host of a great feast—draws on the story of the Last Supper, at which Christ tells his followers that the bread and wine are his flesh and blood. This idea of physically intermingling with God would evolve into the Christian ritual of communion. When God invites the speaker to sit down and eat at the end of the poem, the speaker takes his place in the Christian community on earth.

But that's not the only thing that's going on in the image of the feast. Feasts are also a prominent Biblical metaphor, not only for earthly communion but also for direct communion with God in heaven. In writing this poem, Herbert seems to have had this passage from the Gospel of Luke in mind:

> Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that **he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.**

God-as-host, then, isn't Herbert's innovation, but an ancient idea of what being in God's presence might be like. Those who trust in God, the image suggests, will find themselves God's honored guests.

Last but not least, the poem alludes to the Christian idea of atonement when God asks the speaker if he remembers "who bore the blame" for the speaker's sins. The idea is that, in dying on the cross, Christ wipes away *every* sin, all the way back to the original sin of Adam and Eve, opening the path to universal forgiveness. God's gentle reminder here brings the speaker back to one of the central images of Christian faith.

Where Allusion appears in the poem:

- **Lines 1-6:** "Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back, / Guilty of dust and sin. / But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack / From my first entrance in, / Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning, / If I lacked anything."
- **Line 15:** "And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?"
- **Lines 17-18:** "You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat. / So I did sit and eat."

ALLITERATION

Elegant alliteration not only gives the poem music, but subtly reflects the speaker's feelings, matching sound to experience.

For instance, listen to the echoes in the first lines:

> Love **b**ade me welcome: yet my **s**oul drew **b**ack,
> Guilty of dust and **s**in.

The link between the /b/ sounds of "**b**ade" and "**b**ack" underscores the idea that God's invitation is at first frightening and embarrassing to the speaker. Being bade welcome (that is, welcomed in) only makes him retreat. (Assonance strengthens the effect: "bade" is pronounced "bad," with an /a/ just like the vowel in "back.") The sibilant /s/ of "**s**oul" and "**s**in," which also turns up in the middle of "dust," similarly makes a connection between the speaker's soul and the stains he fears he just can't wash out of it.

God, however, welcomes the speaker in spite of all the speaker's shame:

> A guest, I answered, worthy to **b**e **h**ere:
> Love said, You shall **b**e **h**e.

The mirroring effect here is even stronger: like God, the repeated sounds insist, *Yes, you*.

The speaker still can't believe it, though. He knows in his bones that he's "**un**kind, **un**grateful." Think how different this line would feel if the speaker just called himself mean and thankless: the insistent /un/ here points out that the speaker *could* have been kind and grateful, he just wasn't.

God has an alliterative answer to that, too. When the speaker says he's too ashamed to look God in the face, God replies:

> Who made the **e**yes but **I**?

The alliterative (and assonant) /i/ sound here proclaims that the speaker, no matter how bad he feels about himself, carries God's love in his very body.

Where Alliteration appears in the poem:

- **Line 1:** "bade," "soul," "back"
- **Line 2:** "sin"
- **Line 7:** "be here"
- **Line 8:** "be he"
- **Line 9:** "unkind, ungrateful"
- **Line 12:** "eyes," "I"
- **Line 14:** "doth deserve"
- **Line 15:** "bore," "blame"
- **Line 18:** "So," "sit"

VOCABULARY

Bade me welcome (Line 1) - Welcomed me.

Slack (Line 3) - Hesitant, reluctant.

Marred (Line 13) - Ruined, stained, spoiled.

Doth (Line 14) - Does.

Bore (Line 15) - Carried, took.

Meat (Line 17) - "Meat" here doesn't mean flesh in particular, but food in general.

FORM, METER, & RHYME

FORM

This deceptively simple poem uses a form of Herbert's own design. Its three sestets (six-line stanzas) alternate between longer and shorter lines, a rhythm that mirrors the action of the poem: Love reaches out to invite the speaker in, and the speaker shrinks away, ashamed of himself. When, in the final stanza, the speaker finally accepts Love's invitation and sits down, a last short line—"So I did sit and eat"—reflects just how astonishingly simple forgiveness was all along.

Herbert, like a lot of his fellow 17th-century Metaphysical poets, often used such inventive, flexible, emotional forms, shaping his poems to his themes rather than shaping a theme to a traditional form (like the sonnet, though he wrote some of those, too). Famously, he even experimented with concrete poetry, writing devotional poems in the shape of wings and altars.

METER

"Love (III)" alternates between lines of iambic pentameter and iambic trimeter. That means that its long lines use five iambs, metrical feet with a da-DUM rhythm, like this:

Love bade | me wel- | come: yet | my soul | drew back,

The short lines, meanwhile, use only three iambs, like this:

Who made | the eyes | but I?

The alternation between long, longing, reaching lines and short, withdrawn lines mirrors the speaker's inner dilemma as he shrinks from God's door, afraid he's too sinful to come in.

As is often the case in iambic verse, some of the lines here use little metrical variations for drama. Listen to the speaker's voice in line 9 as he doubts that a sinner like him could be worthy of God's company:

I the | unkind, | ungrate- | ful? Ah | my dear,

The first foot here is a trochee, the opposite of an iamb, with a DUM-da rhythm. That puts a lot of incredulous stress on the word "I": *You couldn't possibly want awful old* me *around?*

RHYME SCHEME

The rhyme scheme of "Love (III)" runs like this:

ABABCC

The movement from the alternating ABAB sections to the closing CC couplets creates a rhythm of setup and payoff, reflecting the speaker's grapple with his faith. At first, the speaker doubts that God could possibly want a sinner like him around. But God always has a loving, simple, inarguable reply to those doubts. The rhyme scheme, similarly, moves time and again from anxious wavering to firm resolution.

SPEAKER

The poem's speaker is a timid, shamefaced soul standing at God's door and worrying whether he's wanted inside. Struck with a bad conscience, he knows he's "guilty of dust and sin"—that is, that he's a flawed human being made of mortal dirt, all too aware of his many crimes.

Readers might see Herbert grappling with his personal faith here. This poem is the final in Herbert's famous and influential collection, *The Temple*, in which the poet (an Anglican clergyman) often writes autobiographically of his religious fervor, doubt, and joy. The fears and hopes here are certainly in some way Herbert's own.

However, this poem also distills one of the basic problems of Christian faith: the difficulty of believing that God's powers of love and forgiveness are bottomless, and thus simply *different* than humanity's. In that, the speaker is a Christian everyman.

SETTING

The setting here is both humble and exalted. The speaker depicts his encounter with God as a meeting with a friendly innkeeper, who, spotting the speaker dithering at the door,

cheerily asks him if he "lack[s] anything." These are the words with which a 17th-century bartender would ask your order, along the lines of "What'll you have?", and they set up a gently funny backdrop for a deeply felt poem.

For the inn here is a metaphor either for a church where the speaker can receive communion, or—even more dramatically—for heaven itself, the place where, as the speaker believes, souls will one day "feast" in (and on) the presence of God. The speaker's juxtaposition of a friendly dinner table with the very halls of heaven quietly makes the point that ordinary life (and ordinary mortals) are the works of God, too.

CONTEXT

LITERARY CONTEXT

A passionate, poetic soul, George Herbert (1593-1633) lived a humble life as a country priest, serving a small English parish that bore the exuberant name of Fuggleston-cum-Bemerton. Herbert, born a nobleman and raised a scholar, often struggled with the limitations his calling imposed on his life; he could easily have made a splash in a royal court, but he felt inexorably drawn to the priesthood.

While he never found public poetic success during his short lifetime, Herbert is now remembered as one of the foremost of the "Metaphysical Poets." This group of 17th-century writers, which included poets like John Donne and Andrew Marvell, shared a combination of brilliant intellect, passionate feeling, and religious fervor. Herbert was not the only one of these poets to work as a clergyman or to explore his relationship with God in poems that sometimes sound more like love songs than hymns.

The Temple (1633), the book in which "Love (III)" is the final poem, was Herbert's only poetry collection, and it might never have seen the light of day. Dying at the age of only 39, Herbert left the book's manuscript to his friend Nicholas Farrar, telling him to publish it if he felt it would do some "dejected poor soul" some good. Farrar, suspecting it would, brought to press what would become one of the world's best-known and best-loved books of poetry. *The Temple* went on to influence poets from Samuel Taylor Coleridge to T.S. Eliot to Wendy Cope.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

George Herbert lived and wrote during an unsettled period of British history. During Herbert's childhood, Britain was enjoying a golden age. The powerful Elizabeth I was on the throne, and Britain was both a formidable military power and a literary treasure house, boasting writers like Shakespeare, Spenser, and Marlowe. But the great "Virgin Queen" died without children in 1603, and her successor, James VI and I of Scotland and England, was not quite such a unifying figure. Many of his people were either skeptical of him or downright hostile to his rule. (The infamous Guy Fawkes, who was executed for trying to blow up James's Parliament, is one vivid example.)

The anti-monarchist plots James grappled with would eventually feed into an unprecedented uprising. By the time that George Herbert died in 1633, James's son Charles I was on the throne—but he wouldn't stay there for long. In 1649, a rebellion led by Oliver Cromwell would depose Charles and publicly behead him, a world-shaking event that upended old certainties about monarchy, hierarchy, and even God's will.

Though Herbert didn't live to see Charles's fall, he was still one of a generation of writers grappling with dramatic change and loss, reaching out to God for strength. The self-conscious anxiety and tender reassurance of "Love (III)" suggests a poet who knows that the inner life is just as tempestuous and meaningful as the outer.

MORE RESOURCES

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- A Brief Biography — Learn more about Herbert's life and work. (https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cambridgeauthors/herbert/)
- The Temple — Learn about The Temple, the important posthumous collection in which this poem is the final word. (https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/memory-arts-in-renaissance-england/george-herbert-the-temple-1633/402E21A67D7F2C98DC77521D7CBCDEC3)
- Herbert's Legacy — Read contemporary poet Wendy Cope's appreciation of Herbert. (https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/dec/06/featuresreviews.guardianreview31)
- The Poem Aloud — Listen to the notable monk Thomas Merton reading the poem aloud. (https://youtu.be/3TI4RwTY2hE)
- The George Herbert Society — Learn much more about Herbert (and see images of his church) via the Herbert Society. (https://www.georgeherbert.org.uk/)

LITCHARTS ON OTHER GEORGE HERBERT POEMS

- Easter Wings
- Redemption
- The Collar
- The Flower
- The Pulley

HOW TO CITE

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