

Andrew Marvell
To his coy mistress
Some more challenging questions!

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1. "But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity."
 - Show how, as the poet moves into his "seize the moment" argument, his choice of words has dramatically changed from those of the previous stanza. (4)
 - Why is "Time" personified here? (4)

2. "Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserv'd virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust."
 - What does the poet mean when he says, "in thy marble vault"? (2)
 - Explain how the poet's technique contrasts elements of grandeur with the absolute mundane. (4)
 - The poet is very explicit in pointing out that he wants sexual intercourse with the woman. How is this shown? (2)
 - What word tells you that the poet believes the woman's coyness is rather silly and with no real meaning? (2)

3. "The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace."
 - Comment on the poet's playing with words when he speaks of the grave being a "private place". (4)

4. "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."
 - The poet expresses an opinion that the woman secretly really wants to become sexually active with him. Explain in your own words how one knows this. (4)

5. "Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run."
 - Comment on the two images of the sun that are presented in these lines. (4)

6. Who do you think was more realistic: the poet who was persuading the woman to have sex with him or the woman who appeared to desire remaining a virgin? (6)

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