

FAVORITE POEMS TAMUK

THE FLEA

John Donne, 1572-1631

I appreciate poems that take a different outlook on love and do not shy away from the truth. I am similar in that fashion so what draws me to this poem is how much I can relate to the story of this poem. In the poem it states, "This flea is you and I, and this / Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is / Though use make you apt to kill me, / Let not to that, self-murder added be." I like these lines from the poem because it highlights how the flea carries blood from both people and that the blood has become one which hints at the relationship between the two people. So if the other person kills the flea that has fed on both of them then they are killing their relationship.

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Student

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is;
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, nay more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that, self-murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;
'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:
Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

from The Norton Anthology of Poetry (1996)