



NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

BY JOHN DONNE

POET'S INTRODUCTION

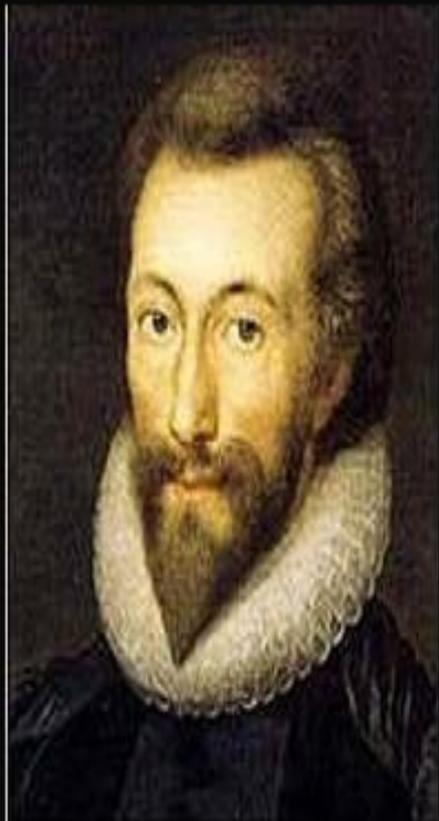
John Donne (1572-1631) is one of the most important poets of the late Elizabethan and Jacobean periods in English literature. In many ways, what is now known as metaphysical poetry began with Donne and his innovative use of imagery, particularly his fondness for extended metaphors and elaborate conceits which draw on what were, at the time, new scientific theories and discoveries. The history of Donne's reputation is the most remarkable of any major writer in English; no other body of great poetry has fallen so far from favor for so long. In Donne's own day his poetry was highly prized among the small circle of his admirers, who read it as it was circulated in manuscript.



POEM'S INTRODUCTION

“No Man is an Island” is a famous section of “Meditation XVII” from this book written by JOHN DONNE. Throughout the poem, the poet is addressing both himself and all of humanity because he is writing about the natural relationship between all humans. This is a message he wants everyone to hear.

The poem explains that it does not matter who you are, every human is an equally important part of the human race. Our differences do not make us lesser or greater than another person.



No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

(John Donne)

'NO MAN IS AN ISLAND' BY JOHN DONNE

**No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.**

No single person is entirely separate from the rest of the world. Every human being is part of a whole. He compares human beings, their connection to one another and the rest of the world, to landmasses that are part of a continent. They are all “part of the main”.

A human being living alone is like a person living in an isolated island. In order to be an island, a man would have to be cut off and isolated from the rest of mankind. Man is born to live his life with others, he cannot grow in isolation. Donne feels that all mankind is of one author, and is one book.



EVERYONE NEEDS SOMEONE TO SHARE THE FEELINGS

'NO MAN IS AN ISLAND' BY JOHN DONNE

If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.

As well as if a promontory (headland) were.
As well as if a manor (House) of thine own
Or of thine friend's were.

In these lines he adds onto it, saying that if the continent lost anything, from a “promontory” to a “clod,” or a “manor” that it would be less. This is relating back to human beings and how every loss, or death, is an injury to the whole. Humans are interconnected with one another. Not only “your” loss is meaningful but also “your friends”. Everyone is injured when one person is died.

Every individual's life affects everyone else's life. The poem says that it doesn't matter how small or big a person is, whether you are related by blood or not, their death will affect you because all humans are part of one collective.

'NO MAN IS AN ISLAND' BY JOHN DONNE

Each man's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.

In these lines, Donne is referring to the effect of death. When someone dies, mankind which he sees as a continent becomes shortened by that death of the individual. We should feel a sense of loss at every death, because it has taken something away from mankind.

Donne uses the image of church funeral bells to say that we all have to die someday. He means we are all equal in death, so we should behave with respect towards other people in life.

The funeral bell that tolls for another person's death also tolls for us, because it marks the death of a part of us, but also because it is a reminder that we ourselves will die one day.



**DEATH -
ULTIMATE
REALITY**



IMPORTANT WORDS

a clod (n.): A clod is a lump of earth. Donne is saying that we are all bits/parts of the planet, which come together in the same way that clods come together to make continents (landmasses: such as Asia, Europe or Africa).

to diminish (v.): Diminishes means gets less. The poet is saying that humans are reduced or made less important every time someone dies: even if that person is a stranger. We lose their knowledge and experience

a manor (n.): A manor is a big, fancy house. Donne is saying that if someone else's house (or one you own) was destroyed, you would feel sad. He wants us all to feel that same pity whenever anyone dies. He thinks we should have empathy (feel what they are feeling) for others.

a promontory (n.): A promontory is a headland: a piece of land that sticks out into the sea. This is a metaphor. Donne means that we should be upset whenever anyone dies (even someone ordinary, not only rich or famous).

to toll (v.): A bell tolls (rings) when there is bad news. Here it is a funeral bell, telling the townsfolk or village that someone has died.