POETRY

SWEETEST LOVE, I DO NOT GOE
John Donne

JOHN DONNE (1572- 1631), the pioneer of a new kind of lyrical and satirical verse called 'Metaphysical', was born in London into a prosperous Roman Catholic family of traders at a time when England was staunchly anti-Catholic. Donne was forced to leave Oxford University without a degree because of his religion. He studied law, and read theology. He also participated in two Naval expeditions and became secretary to a powerful noble, a job he lost when he was briefly sent to prison for secretly marrying his patron's niece. In 1615, at the age of 42, Donne accepted ordination in the Anglican Church and soon became one of the greatest preachers of his time. In love – lyricism, Donne broke completely with the Petrarchan tradition, introducing an intellectual and colloquial tone. His love poems use the latest discoveries of science and geography to hammer home a point and combine passion with verbal and intellectual 'teasing'. Donne is well known for his **Songs and Sonnets, Satires and the Elegies** *and* **Sermons.** *Genuine poetic feelings, harsh metres, strained and whimsical images characterise all his poetic creations.*

A. Work in small groups and discuss these questions :

1 Yours is a very loving family. You have always lived together. But now you have to leave them to go to a different city to pursue your studies. How would you feel, leaving the members of your family?

2 Imagine yourself at a railway platform /bus-stand to see off your younger brother/ sister who studies in Bangalore. What do you say to him/her? What feelings do you have at that time?

SWEETEST LOVE, I DO NOT GOE

Sweetest love, I do not goe,
　　For **wearinesse** of thee,

Nor in the hope the world can show
    A fitter Love for mee;
      But since that I   5
Must dye at last, 'tis best,
To use my selfe in **jest**
      Thus by fain'd deaths to **dye**.

Yesternight the Sunne went hence,
    And yet is here to day,   10

He hath no desire nor sense,
    Nor halfe so short a way:
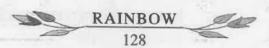   Then feare not mee,
But beleeve that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take   15
      More wings and **spurres then** hee.

O how **feeble** is mans power,
    That if good fortune fall,
Cannot adde another houre,
      Nor a lost houre recall!   20
      But come bad chance,

And wee joyne to it our strength,
And wee teach it art and length,
    It selfe o'r us to advance

B.1. 1. Read the following sentences and write 'T' for true and 'F' for false statements :

a) The poet wants to go away because he is tired of his beloved.

b) The poet has found another lady who is more beautiful.

c) The poet intends to go on a longer journey than what the Sun undertakes.

d) Man's power is very weak.

e) The poet loves his beloved so intensely that he will come back very soon.

B.1. 2. Answer the following questions briefly :

1) Why does the poet want to go away from his beloved?

2) What are the things that the sun does not have?

3) What will make the speaker's journey speedier?

4) What makes a man's power feeble?

5) How do sighing and weeping affect the speaker?

6) How does the beloved waste the speaker's life?

7) In what way will the lovers remain united?

When thou **sigh'st**, thou sigh'st not winde,   25
    But sigh'st my soule away,
When thou weep'st, unkindly kinde,
    My lifes blood doth decay.
      It cannot bee
That thou lov'st mee, as thou say'st,   30
If in thine my life thou waste,
    Thou art the best of mee.

Let not thy **divining** heart
    Forethinke me any ill,
Destiny may take thy **part**,   35
    And may thy feares fulfil;
    But thinke that wee
Are but turn'd aside to sleepe;
They who one another keepe
    Alive, ne'r **parted** bee.   40

B.2.1. Complete the following sentences on the basis of the poem:

(i) The speaker's beloved sighs away ....

(ii) The speaker's life-blood decays when ....

(iii) The speaker asks his beloved not to forethink him ....

(iv) They who keep one another alive can never ....

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

wearinesse *(Old spelling)*: weariness (modern spelling) tiredness

jest *(n)*: something done to amuse, joke

dye *(v)*: die(Donne's special way of writing 'y' for 'i')

yesternight *(adv)*: last night

spurres (OE): spurs (ME) motive, appendage (example of pun)

then (OE): than (ME)

feeble (adj): frail, weak

sigh'st (V, OE): sighs (ME), moan, groan

divining (adj): perceiving, heavenly (example of pun)

part *(n)*: favour you, take your role

parted *(v)*: left

C. 1. Long Answer Questions

1. Read the following lines carefully:

   'When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not winde,
   But sigh'st my soule away,'

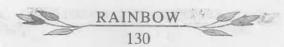   This is an example of hyperbole. Find out other examples of hyperbole in the poem.

2. Write a note on the use of hyperbole in the poem.

3. *But beleeve that I shall make*
   Speedier journeyes, since I take
   More wings and spurres then hee.

   Comment on the power of love in the light of these lines.

4. Explain:

   'They who one another keepe
   Alive, ne'r parted bee.

5. Summarise the poems in about 100 words.

6. What arguments does the poet give at the time of parting with his beloved?

7. How can lovers overcome 'bad chance'?
8. What images from Nature are used in the poem?
9. Which images do you like the most?

C. 2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following in **groups** or **pairs**:
1. True love knows no distance.
2. Love is the basis of a happy family life

C. 3. COMPOSITION

a. You had to leave your mother for the first time. Write a letter to your mother describing your feelings at the time of parting and also promising your speedy return to her.
b. Write a paragraph in about 100 words on 'meeting and parting with your loved ones'.

D. WORD STUDY

D.1. Dictionary Use

Ex. 1. Read carefully the following line taken from the poem:

*When **thou sigh'st**, thou sigh'st not **winde**,*

In the above sentence, 'thou', 'sigh'st' and 'winde' are the old usages. The modern equivalents of these words are 'you', 'sighs' and 'wind' respectively.

Write the modern spelling of the following words:

goe —————	wearinesse —————	thee —————
mee —————	selfe —————	dye —————
sunne —————	hath —————	halfe —————
feare —————	beleeve —————	journeyes —————
hee —————	adde —————	houre —————
wee —————	joyne —————	thou —————
winde —————	soule —————	weep'st —————

Ex. 2. Look up a dictionary and write two meanings of the following words – the one in which it is used in the lesson and the other which is more common

desire   wing   spur   fortune   aside

D.2. Word-formation

Ex.1. Read carefully the following line taken from the poem:
Yesternight the Sunne went hence,...

In the above sentence the word 'yesternight' is made of 'yester' and 'night'. Find out other such words in the poem.

D.3. Word-meaning
Ex 1. Write the antonyms of the following words and use them in your sentences:

sweetest	——————	hope	——————
yesternight	——————	belief	——————
feeble	——————	waste	——————

E. GRAMMAR
Read the following lines carefully:

Sweetest love, I do not goe,
For wearinesse of thee,
Nor in the hope the world can show
A fitter Love for mee;

The lines make use of a negative sentence structure, which can be rewritten as 'I go **neither** for weariness of thee **nor** in the hope the world can show a fitter love for me."

Ex. 1. Rewrite the following lines using **'neither........ nor'** structure:

   (i)   He hath (has) no desire nor sense
   (ii) (Man) cannot adde another houre,
         Nor a lost houre recall!

Ex. 2. Construct five sentences describing 'what you do not do or do not like', with the help of 'neither... nor'. For example: 'I play neither cricket nor hockey.

F. ACTIVITIES
Ex. 1. Have you ever read a poem, story, novel or seen a film on love? Describe the story in about 150 words.

Ex. 2. Meet your seniors who are about to leave the college/school after taking their final examination. Try to know how they feel at the time of leaving their college/school.

Ex. 3. Prepare a report on 'the last day on the campus', mentioning different activities that take place on that day.