

On Time (163334)

John Milton

FLY, envious Time, till thou run out thy race:
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping Hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain!
For, when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,
And, last of all, thy greedy Self consumed,
Then long eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss,
And joy shall undertake us as a flood;
When everything that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
About the supreme Throne
Of Him, to whose happy-making sight alone
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this Earthy grossness quit,
Attired with stars we shall forever sit,
Truempling over death, and Chance, and thee,
On Time!

About the Poet:

John Milton (9 December 1608- 8 November 1674) was an English poet, pamphleteer and historian. He is best known for writing "Paradise Lost (1667)" which is widely regarded as the greatest epic poem in English. He was a prominent author during a time of political upheaval and religious flux. His poetry and prose reflect deep personal convictions and passion for freedom and self-determination.

About the Poem:

In the poem 'On time', Milton deals with the idea that life on the earth is wrought with constant change and decay. It is a poem essentially about surviving in a crazy world where time influences the lives of people. The poet emphasizes that humans can escape the ravages of time by attaining an eternal life in heaven by leading a pious life. Thus, the poet's religious conviction is remarkable.

Glossary:

lazy leaden : to pass time wastefully

plummets pace: pendulum's race (in the clock)
 glut: satisfy fully
 dross: worthless, rubbish
 eternity: infinite, unending time, life after death

1. Choose the correct alternative:-

- (a) "lazy leaden stepping hours" denotes time as-
 - (i) fast (ii) furious
 - (iii) crazy (iv) very slow
- (b) What guides human souls towards divinity? :-
 - (i) bad habits (ii) peace, love and humanity
 - (iii) evils of heart (iv) selfishness
- (c) The thing which is eternal
 - (i) greed (ii) envy
 - (ii) selfless love (iv) selfish love

2. Answer the following questions in 15-20 words each:

- (a) "And merely mortal dross" what do you understand by mortal dross?
- (b) "With an individual kiss;
 And joy shall overtake us as a flood",
 What does individual kiss mean here?
- (c) "Then long earthly shall greet our bliss." How will long eternity greet our bliss?
- (d) What is meant by 'earthly grossness'?
- (e) "Fly envious time"; why does the poet want the envious time to fly?

3. Answer the following in 30-40 words each:

- (a) What guides human souls towards divinity?
- (b) What is the theme of the poem?
- (c) "About the supreme throne of him",
 Which supreme throne does the poet talk about?
- (d) What is sincerely good and perfectly divine?

4. Answer the following in 150 words each:

- (a) "Triumphing over Death and Chance, and thee o Time,"
 What does triumph over death, chance and time signify?
- (b) Write critically the central idea of the poem.