

The Canonization Key Info

Writer: John Donne | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Key Facts

- **Title:** The Canonization
- **Poet:** John Donne (1572–1631)
- **Publication Date:** First published in 1633, two years after Donne's death, in *Songs and Sonnets*
- **Form:** Metaphysical Love Poem
- **Meter:** We find different iambs (metrical feet with a da-**DUM** rhythm) in this poem: pentameter, tetrameter, trimeter, etc.
- **Rhyme Scheme:** Each nine-line stanza uses the same rhyme scheme: ABBACCCAA
- **Total Lines/Stanza:** 5 stanzas, each with 9 lines (Total: 45 lines)
- **Tone:** Bold, passionate, clever, and spiritual (the speaker defends love with strong logic and emotion)
- **Interesting Pattern:** The first and last lines of each stanza end with the same word: "love"
- **Speaker:** A passionate, aged lover defending his love from criticism
- **Addressed To:** A person (possibly a friend or critic) who mocks or questions the poet's love
- **Famous Lines:**
 1. "For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love."
 2. "And by these hymns, all shall approve
Us canonized for Love."
- **Summary in Short:** "The Canonization" is a metaphysical love poem where the speaker defends his love against those who criticize it. He tells others to focus on their own lives and let him love in peace. He argues that his love harms no one. For him, love is not a sin but a holy experience that makes two people one soul. In the end, he says that if they cannot live forever, their love will be immortal through poetry. People will remember them as **saints of love** and "canonize" them for their sacred and deep love.

Key Notes

Metaphysical Poetry

The word “meta” means beyond/after. So, metaphysical means “beyond the physical.” This means that metaphysical poetry deals with subjects that are not physical or concrete. Metaphysical poetry deals with spiritual subjects that we can feel in our souls. For example: love, death, God, religion, etc. Metaphysical poems are full of wit, conceits, passion/emotion, and logical arguments. John Donne (1572-1631) is considered to be the pioneer and most prominent metaphysical poet. Other famous metaphysical poets are George Herbert (1593-1633), Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), Henry Vaughan (1621-1695), Abraham Cowley (1618-1667), Richard Crashaw (1612-1649), and Thomas Carew (1595-1640), etc.

However, the term "metaphysical poetry" was first coined, much later, by Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). He used it in his book *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779).

Conceit in Donne's Poetry

A conceit is a strange and far-fetched comparison between two very different things. These clever comparisons/extended metaphors make Donne's poems surprising and interesting. Conceit is a major feature of Metaphysical poetry. We find a famous example of conceit in his poem “*A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*” (1633). In this poem, Donne compares the two souls of the lovers to the two legs of a drawing compass. He writes:

**“If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;”**

One leg of the compass stands still, and the other moves, but they stay connected. This shows that even when lovers are far apart, their souls remain united.

What do we understand by the word “Canonization”?

Canonization means making someone a saint. In religion (especially in the Catholic Church), when a person lives a very holy life, after he dies, the Church may officially declare him a saint. This process is called canonization. In the poem, John Donne uses this idea in a non-religious way. He says that he and his beloved should be “saints of love.” He believes their love is so pure and deep that it should be respected like a holy thing.