

The Sun Rising Summary

Writer: John Donne | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Stanza 1—Scolding the Sun, Love Does not Follow Time

The speaker/poet wakes up with his lover in bed and sees the sun rising. He personifies the Sun and calls it a **“busy old fool.”** This means the speaker is annoyed that the Sun has disturbed their private moment. He asks the Sun why he is shining into their room through the windows and curtains. He wonders why lovers should stop their time together just because the Sun has come up. He tells the Sun to go disturb schoolboys who are late, apprentices (young workers) who do not want to work, or hunters in the royal court who follow the king, or even farmers who must go harvest crops. He says love does not follow seasons or time. Love is always the same in any weather or time. Hours, days, and months do not matter to true love. Hours, days, and months are just useless parts of time, like old clothes.

Stanza 2—Making the Sun Disappear

Now, the speaker looks at the sunlight. He admits that the Sun’s rays are strong and respected. But he proudly asks the Sun why he thinks he is so great. The speaker says that he could **“eclipse”** the Sun just by closing his eyes — a simple wink could make him disappear! But the speaker does not want to close his eyes, because then he cannot see his lover. The speaker does not want to stop looking at her beauty, even for a second. He jokes that maybe the Sun is already blinded by her beauty. And if he is not yet, the Sun should look closely again, and come back tomorrow and tell him where the riches of the Indies (spices and gold) are now. (The Sun cannot find those riches/treasures of the Indies at their usual places). Because all those treasures are now in the bedroom, with him and his lover. He says even the kings the Sun saw yesterday are not important now, because everything important is here in their bed.

Stanza 3—Bedroom is the Whole World

The speaker makes a bold statement. He says his lover is like all the countries (states) of the world, and he is like all the rulers (princes). He says he does not need anything else in life. Other rulers only pretend to be powerful, but their power is nothing compared to the love they share. All honor is fake, and money is also not real compared to the value of love. Then he tells the Sun that he is only half as happy as the lovers are, because he must shine on the whole world. The speaker says the sun is old now, so he should work less. Since the sun’s job is to

warm the world, the speaker says that the job is done by warming only their bedroom. Because their bedroom is the whole world.

LxNotes