



Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying;  
And this same flow'r that smiles today  
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heav'n, the sun,  
The higher he's a-getting,  
The sooner will his race be run,  
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,  
When youth and blood are warmer;  
But being spent, the worse, and worst  
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,  
And while ye may, go marry;  
For having lost but once your prime,  
You may forever tarry\*.

- Robert Herrick,  
published 1648

\*tarry = linger, loiter

**Questions** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions with thoughtful, complete sentences.

1. This poem's theme is pretty straightforward. Write just one sentence in your own words that summarizes the poem's main message.

2. Now, let's look at the poem's structure. What is the poem's rhyme scheme? What is the meter/syllable pattern?

3. Write two passages from the poem where Herrick employs personification.

4. Symbolically, how are people connected to elements in the natural world? Specifically address the poem's use of flowers and the sun.

5. Clearly, the speaker thinks that youth is better than old

age. What is his reasoning? What age do you think of as the prime of life? Explain your answer.

6. In order for these young people to make their lives glorious and fulfilled, there is one specific action they must take. What, according to the speaker, is that action? (Hint: You'll find the answer in line 14.)

**YOLO**  
YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE

7. What, do you suppose, Herrick would say if you told him you interpreted his poem to mean that you should live a wild and crazy life, not worrying about the consequences of your actions?

8. Is this poem depressing or just realistic? Explain your answer.

*Carpe Diem*