

The Flea

John Donne (1572–1631)

Mark Chapman (1960-)

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is;
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, nay more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that, self-murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;
'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:
Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

Source: The Norton Anthology of Poetry (1996)

$\text{♩} = 96$

Soprano
 1. Mark but this flea, this flea, and mark in this, How lit - tle that, lit-tle
 2. Oh stay, three lives, three lives in one flea spare, Where we al - most, al -

Alto
 1. Mark but this flea, this flea, and mark in this, How lit - tle that, lit-tle
 2. Oh stay, three lives, three lives in one flea spare, Where we al - most, al -

Tenor
 1. Mark but this flea, this flea, and mark in this, How lit - tle that, lit-tle
 2. Oh stay, three lives, three lives in one flea spare, Where we al - most, al -

Bass
 1. Mark but this flea, and mark in this, How lit - tle that
 2. Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare, Where we al - most,

8

S.
 that which thou de - ni - est me is; It sucked me first, me first, and now sucks
 most, nay more than marr - ied are. This flea is you, is you and I, and

A.
 that which thou de - ni - est me is; It sucked me first, me first, and now sucks
 most, nay more than marr - ied are. This flea is you, is you and I, and

T.
 that which thou de - ni - est me is; It sucked me first, me first, and now sucks
 most, nay more than marr - ied are. This flea is you, is you and I, and

B.
 which thou de - ni - est me is; It sucked me first, and now sucks
 nay more than marr - ied are. This flea is you, and I, and

15

S.
 thee, And in this flea, this flea our two bloods min - gled be; Thou know'st that this
 this Our marr - iage bed, our bed, and marr - iage tem - ple is; Though pa - rents grudge,

A.
 thee, And in this flea, this flea our two bloods min - gled be; Thou know'st that this
 this Our marr - iage bed, our bed, and marr - iage tem - ple is; Though pa - rents grudge,

T.
 thee, And in this flea, this flea our two bloods min - gled be;
 this Our marr - iage bed, our bed, and marr - iage tem - ple is;

B.
 thee, And in this flea our two bloods min - gled be;
 this Our marr - iage bed, and marr - iage tem - ple - is;

22

S.
 — can - not be said nor loss of mai - den - head, Yet
 — and you, w'are met, these li - ving walls of jet. Though

A.
 — can - not be said nor loss of mai - den - head,
 — and you, w'are met, these li - ving walls of jet.

T.
 A sin, nor shame, nor loss of mai - den - head,
 And cloi - stered in these li - ving walls of jet.

B.
 A sin, nor shame, nor loss of mai - den - head, Yet en -
 And cloi - stered in these li - ving walls of jet. Though use

27

S.
 this en - joys be - fore it woo, And pam - pered swells with one blood
 use make you apt to kill me, Let not to that, self - mur - der

A.
 Yet this en - joys be - fore it woo, And pam - pered swells with one blood
 Though use make you apt to kill me, Let not to that, self - mur - der

T.
 Yet this en - joys be - fore it woo, And pam - pered swells with one blood
 Though use make you apt to kill me, Let not to that, self - mur - der

B.
 joys be - fore it woo, And pam - pered swells with
 make you apt to kill me, Let not self - mur - der

31

S.
 made of two, And this, a - las, is more than we would do.
 add - ed be, And sac - ri - lege, three sins in kill - ing three.

A.
 made of two, a - las, is more than we would do.
 add - ed be, sac - ri - lege, three sins in kill - ing three.

T.
 made of two, And this, a - las, is more than we would do.
 add - ed be, And sac - ri - lege, three sins in kill - ing three.

B.
 blood of two, And this is more than we would do.
 add - ed be, And sac - ri - lege in kill - ing three.

36

S. 3. Cru-el and sud-den, and sud-den, hast— thou since Pur-pled thy nail, thy nail, in

A. 3. Cru-el and sud-den, and sud-den, hast— thou— since Pur-pled thy nail, thy nail, in

T. 3. Cru-el and sud-den, and sud-den, hast— thou— since— Pur-pled thy nail, thy nail,— in

B. 3. Cru-el and sud-den, hast— thou since Pur-pled thy nail, in

44

S. blood of in - no - cence? Where-in could this flea, could this flea guil - ty be,

A. blood of in - no - cence? Where-in could this flea, could this flea guil - ty— be,

T. blood of in - no - cence? Where-in could this flea, could this flea guil - ty— be,

B. blood of in - no - cence? Where-in could this flea guil - ty be,

51

S. Ex-cept in that drop, in that drop which it sucked from thee?— Find'st

A. Ex-cept in that drop, in that drop which it sucked from thee?— Find'st

T. Ex-cept in that drop, in that drop which it sucked from thee? Yet thou tri - umph'st, and say'st that

B. Ex-cept in that drop which it sucked from thee? Yet thou tri - umph'st, and say'st that

58

S. not thy self, nor me the weaker now; 'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:

A. not thy self, nor me the weaker now; 'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be: Just

T. thou nor me the weaker now; 'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:

B. thou nor me the weaker now; 'Tis true; how false, fears be: so

64

S. so much ho - nor, when thou yield'st to me, Waste, as this flea's

A. so much ho - nor, when thou yield'st to me, Will waste, as

T. Just so much ho - nor, when thou yield'st to me, Will waste, as this flea's

B. much ho - nor, when thou yield'st to me, as this flea's

rit.

68

S. death took life from thee.

A. this flea's death took life from thee.

T. death took life from thee.

B. death took life from thee.