



“The Pageant Verses”: For each stage, the time of life itself is the speaker.

- **Childhood:** What is valued by Childhood? How does the prayer of the final line reveal the limitations of Childhood’s perspective?
- **Manhood:** The final lines deride the boy’s “peevisish game.” How does the perspective of the rest of this verse compare to that of Childhood? Has the man matured or simply acquired new toys?
- **Venus and Cupid:** What is the role of pride in this verse? What is the effect of Cupid in triumph over the speaker? What does the author suggest about love at this time of life?
- **Age:** Age calls itself the “last and best part” of life. Why? Why the new sense of freedom as opposed to the previous three stages? What does he value now?
- **Death:** What is the role of pride here? How would you characterize Death’s tone? What is the effect?
- **Fame:** How does Lady Fame “confound” death? Where does Fame “live”? Could the “voice of people” be “perpetual”?
- **Time:** Time is characterized as “the lord of every hour.” Consider the doubleness of this phrase. How does More depict Time’s power in this section?
- **Eternity:** Now, on what is Time based? Compare to the destruction of “world and all” promised by Time. What is the significance of having Eternity depict himself as an emperor?
- **The Poet:** How does “The Poet” offer a universal or comprehensive perspective? How does the change in form and language influence this change? What does the Poet point to as the source of true permanence? How does the last line of this last verse relate to the last line of the first, the other prayer in the cycle?

Concluding questions: Consider the relationship between “fashioned figures” and “true... images.” How might delighting in and studying “fashioned figures” enable one to “nourish... [the] soul on true things”? Taking the cycle of verses as a whole, what is the poem’s final position on life?

“A Rueful Lamentation”: Queen Elizabeth, deceased mother of King Henry VIII, shares her lamentation.

- **Title:** What is a “Lamentation”? This poem is entitled a “*Rueful* Lamentation.” What do the lines of this poem suggest that the Queen “rues”?
- **Stanza one:** In the first stanza, the speaker addresses a specific audience. How is this audience characterized? Line four offers a sobering caution: “Remember death.” In what way does the speaker intend this to challenge the audience’s perspective? What precisely is the argument of this first stanza? How is the now-dead queen an exemplar of this argument? Formally, what is the effect of the refrain “Lo, here I lie”? How does it affect the tone of this lamentation?
- **Stanzas two through six:** Lines 9-43 address different worldly privileges, powers, and values that the queen enjoyed. Each has fallen by the wayside with death. How has death changed her perspective toward each? Where is God’s place in these contrasts, between what is valued in life and how it is seen at the time of death? Death is described as God’s “mighty messenger” (stanza 3, line 20). Why? How does this inform the perspective of the poem?
- **Stanzas seven to twelve:** The final six stanzas contain a series of farewells. The focus, though, is more on cheer and detachment (see, for example, lines 55-6 & 59-60). What are the Queen’s parting wishes for her loved ones? Does she ask anything for herself? How does this, too, represent a shifting of priorities from those of life? How is this shift made more urgent or persuasive by being spoken by someone in the grave? The final three and a half lines turn to God himself. What is the nature of this prayer? Does this seem a consistent or fitting closing to the laments of earthly goods and farewells that have gone before?

Concluding questions: How do you characterize the overall tone or disposition of this poem? What sort of spirituality is developed with regard to the moment of death? How might one consider forming attachments or attitudes during life in response to this poem?