

2ed Stage  
Ninth Lecture

**To Daffodils**

BY ROBERT HERRICK

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see  
You haste away so soon;  
As yet the early-rising sun  
Has not attain'd his noon.  
Stay, stay,  
Until the hasting day  
Has run  
But to the even-song;  
And, having pray'd together, we  
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,  
We have as short a spring;  
As quick a growth to meet decay,  
As you, or anything.  
We die  
As your hours do, and dry  
Away,  
Like to the summer's rain;  
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,  
Ne'er to be found again.

## **To Daffodils: Commentary**

The speaker is the poet himself. He addresses the daffodils expressing his sadness because their life is very short. They are about to die before noon. The word "noon" is used metaphorically to mean youth. Since ancient times the day is used metaphorically to mean human life: Morning stands for babyhood, noon stands for youth and evening stands for old age.

The poet pleads to the daffodils to stay till evening in order to be able to go with them, i. e. to die with them. This is suggested by the "even song" which means the evening prayer with its connotations of death. In the second stanza, the poet explains the metaphors of the first one. Human beings, he says, stay in this life for a short time like the daffodils. They also have a short spring (youth) like them and they grow up quickly from babyhood to youth, maturity, old age and death. They (people) die like the flowers and like any other creature. In the last three lines he compares human life to summer rain which is usually very short and to the Morning dew drops which fade away as soon as the sun rises.

### **Form and Language:**

This poem is a light lyric written in two ten-line stanzas alternating between iambic tetrametre, iambic trimetre and monometre. The poem is written in simple language and all the images and metaphors are taken from nature: daffodils, the sun, noon, evening, spring, summer rain and morning dew.

### **Theme and Tone:**

The theme of the poem is the shortness of human life. The tone of the speaker is neutral throughout the poem but it is pessimistic in the last line. It seems as if the poet does not believe in the afterlife.