

A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body

Andrew Marvell

Soul

- O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise
A Soul enslav'd so many ways?
With bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands
In Feet; and manacled in Hands.
- (5) Here blinded with an Eye; and there,
Deaf with the drumming of an Ear.
A Soul hung up, as 'twere, in Chains
Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins.
Tortur'd, besides each other part,
- (10) In a vain Head, and double Heart.

Body

- O who shall me deliver whole,
From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?
Which, stretcht upright, impales me so,
That mine own Precipice I go;
- (15) And warms and moves this needless Frame:
(A Fever could but do the same.)
And, wanting where its spite to try,
Has made me live to let me die.
A Body that could never rest,
- (20) Since this ill Spirit it possest.

Soul

- What Magic could me thus confine
Within another's Grief to pine?
Where whatsoever it complain,
I feel, that cannot feel, the pain.
- (25) And all my care its self employs,
That to preserve, which me destroys:
Constrain'd not only to endure
Diseases, but what's worse, the Cure:
And ready oft the Port to gain,
- (30) Am Shipwreckt into Health again.

Body

- But Physic* yet could never reach
The Maladies thou me dost teach;
Whom the first Cramp of Hope dost tear:
And then the Palsy shakes of Fear.
- (35) The Pestilence of Love does heat:
Or Hatred's hidden Ulcer eat.
Joy's cheerful Madness does perplex:
Or Sorrow's other Madness vex.
Which Knowledge forces me to know,
- (40) And Memory will not forgo.
What but a Soul could have the wit
To build me up for Sin so fit?
So Architects do square and hew,
Green Trees that in the Forest grew.

*Physic: medicine