

Questions on The Flea by John Donne:

1. In plain English, summarize the speaker's argument, in each stanza. How does his argument develop, shift and adapt to actions that occur?
2. What is notable about the fact that the poem is titled "The Flea" and uses this insect as the focal point of the speaker's argument about love? Is this surprising? Disgusting? Delightful? Is this demeaning love? Is this an instance of tapinosis?
3. What is the tone of the speaker's language? Is he in earnest? Somber? Amorous? Jocular?
4. How does the speaker refer to such serious things as sin, death and killing in relation to love? Is a deeper relationship between these things implied in the poem?
5. How does this, as an amorous *carpe diem* poem, compare to some of John Donne's religious poetry (see, for instance, "[Batter my heart, three-personed God]")?