

# John Donne and Sonnet 14

 Project for Engl 170-04, Fall 2010, by [Marybeth Gamble](#).

## Explanation

All of the images within the photo essay were taken by friends and family. I was present at several of the sights and can attest for the beauty and power within each snapshot. I believe this photo essay plays along with John Donne's sonnet very well, for although Donne writes in a masculine tone, the feminine elements within his writing bring a higher level of wonder and amazement to his writing.

Below is an explanation of why I chose each specific image and its relation to Donne's sonnet 14, found at <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/657.html>. The video can be found on youtube.com under the tag "donne gamble", or seen above if the widget works.

**Batter my heart:** I chose this image because the rocks, in an abstract view, take on the form of a broken heart. If you would like to stretch this photo, I would say God is represented through the rocks, water, and trees to represent dependability (rocks), life (trees), and God's eternal love (water).

**As yet but knock:** This image is striking in composition and contains the dull and ugly. Despite these unloved objects, together they can form beauty with gentle hands. The sticks and rocks can represent knocking, while the water may represent the shining.

**That I may rise:** This image shows this large energy crashing against the rocks and that is how the speaker may feel. The speaker is like a person in a violent river; despite how hard man tries to stand, the water overthrows him, and thus pushes man back down.

**Your force to break:** This crater represents a broken and tired person who asks God to renew his life. This crater needs water to become the beautiful form it once was, and therefore needs God to come into his life.

**I, like an usurp'd:** This image was chosen because of the bridge on the top of the picture. I feel like man imposed himself onto nature and has thus destroyed the purity of the space seen in previous images.

**Labour to admit you:** This image is centered on the waterfall that is circular shaped. The image shows small waterfalls working together to create one large rush of energy, which can be said about birth. In birth, a woman's system needs to work together to give life to the small form. This image also demonstrates the "O" moment in Donne's sonnet, representing the climax that can happen during sex, and a spiritual connection with God. Also, this image is well fitted because "to no end" represents the constant flow of water and life; although any form of water may travel the farthest it can, such as the ocean, the energy within the water is still everlasting.

**Reason, your viceroy:** This image is both beautiful and clear in the viewer's eyes, which is similar to that of the speaker. The speaker acknowledges he needs to be defended from the world's weaknesses because the possibilities within the speaker are valuable and wondrous.

**But is captive:** This image shows water captive within the rocks boundaries, unable to join the more powerful stream. The rocks provide a safe resting place for water, although it demonstrates its weakness and inability to focus on the true purpose of its form.

**Yet dearly I love you:** The speaker acknowledges that he is truly in love with God and everything He can give humanity. This image demonstrates this idea as it is a breathtaking view on how wonderful life can be, which the speaker so desperately wants.

**But I am betroth'd:** This image is different from the natural images because it shows how manmade objects have disrupted the constant beauty of nature. The speaker knows he has followed sin repeatedly and cannot help continuing down this path of destruction.

**Divorce me:** The speaker desperately wants to be free of his sins again. The speaker knows he has tried several times before in an attempt to flee from temptation, but has not had the determination and strength to seclude him from everything evil. This image shows how desertion may be the only way for the speaker to live life happily and in God's graces.

**Take me to you:** The speaker wants God to overtake him, as that is the only way he sees of saving himself. This image demonstrates that capturing the stream within the strong, supportive rocks, and not releasing the stream until it is ready to leave can represent his spiritual resurrection.

**Except you enthrall me:** This image has a ray of light floating on the surface of the water. This may represent God's presence in nature and all that He created. The speaker believes only God's full penetration in his soul will be the only answer of new life.

**Nor ever chaste:** This final image shows the full power of the waterfalls into the stream. It represents the violent, yet beautiful act of God ravishing man so that God and man will become one.