

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time

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To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time is a poem written by Robert Herrick in the 17th century. The poem is in the genre of *carpe diem*, Latin for *seize the day*.

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Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May,
by John William Waterhouse

Theme: Carpe diem

First published in 1648 in a volume of verse entitled *Hesperides*, it is perhaps one of the most famous poems to extol the notion of *carpe diem*. *Carpe diem* expresses a philosophy that recognizes the brevity of life and therefore the need to live for and in the moment. The phrase originates in Horace's *Ode* 1.11.

The opening line, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may", echoes the Latin phrase *collige, virgo, rosas* ("gather, girl, the roses"), which appears at the end of the poem *De rosis nascentibus*,^[1] also called *Idyllium de rosis*, attributed to Ausonius or Virgil.

Poem

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,

Old Time is still a-flying:

And this same flower that smiles to-day

To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,

The higher he's a-getting,

The sooner will his race be run,

And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,

When youth and blood are warmer;

But being spent, the worse, and worst

Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,

And while ye may, go marry:

For having lost but once your prime,

You may for ever tarry.

See also

- 1648 in poetry

References

1. ^ *De rosis nascentibus (in German)* (http://www.fh-augsburg.de/~Harsch/Chronologia/Lsante01/Vergilius/ver_apro.html) , in a collection of the works of Virgil under the note *Hoc carmen scripsit poeta ignotus* ("An unknown poet wrote this poem").

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