

## Milton the Lyrical Poet

Though Milton is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (more on that later), he also authored quite a bit of lyrical poetry. Most lyrical poems are short in length and are designed to express the emotions and feelings of a single speaker. A variety of subforms, including sonnets, elegies, dramatic monologues, and odes, fall under the category of lyrical poetry. (For additional information on reading lyrical poetry, please read the City University of New York English Department's online guide<sup>1</sup>.) Milton's lyrical poetry displays the breadth of his reading of and exposure to different verse forms, as he often adapts Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Italian poetic conventions and conceits to his own needs. However, there is something entirely novel in much of Milton's lyrical poems: the unprecedented vigor and rhetorical power of his language. In the lectures you will view over the course of this semester, you will often hear lecturer John Rogers discuss Milton as a poet of power rather than a craftsman known for the artfulness of his phrases and the beauty of his verse. His lyrical poetry attests to this qualification, where, rather than the fanciful details and lilting rhythms so common in Elizabethan poetry, we find an unexpected economy of language.

1. [http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/read\\_lyr.html](http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/read_lyr.html)