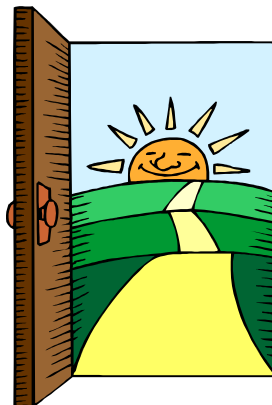


Thomas Heyrick
(1649- 1694)

Thou beauteous offspring of a sire as fair;
With thy kind influence thou dost all things heat:
Thou gildest the heaven, the sea, the earth and air,
And under massy rocks dost gold beget.
The opaque dull earth thou dost make fine,
Thou dost in the moon and planets shine;
And if astronomy say true
Our earth to them doth seem a planet too.

How unaccountable thy journeys prove!
Thy swift course through the universe doth fly
From lofty heights in distant heavens above,
To all that at the lowly centre lie.
Thy parent sun once in a day
Through heaven doth steer his well-beat way;
Thou of a swifter subtler breed
Dost every moment his day's course exceed.



On a Sunbeam Worksheet

DISCUSS

In what ways does the poem seem old-fashioned and in what ways does it seem modern?

VOCABULARY

Look up these words in a dictionary and write down their meanings:

offspring, (to) gild, massy, (to) beget, opaque, (un)accountable lofty, subtle, exceed

COMPREHENSION

1. What is the "sire" or father of the sunbeam?
2. What other word could be used for the Sun's "influence"?
3. What effect do the Sun's rays have on everything?
4. How does the sunbeam gild the "sea, earth and air"?
5. The metaphor of sunlight painting the earth gold is understandable. What idea in the next line (line 4) seems unreasonable to us now?
6. In what heavenly bodies is the light of the Sun reflected?
7. "Our earth doth seem a planet too"? How does this statement increase the importance of the Sun?
8. How is the light of the sunbeam "unaccountable" compared to the light of the Sun from outer space?
9. How long does the Sun take to "steer his way"?
10. What advantages does the sunbeam seem to have over the movement of the Sun?

RESEARCH

1. Find out about alchemy using an encyclopaedia or the internet.
2. Was alchemy real science, or magic?
3. What influence does this have on understanding line 4 in the poem?

CREATIVE WRITING

EITHER

1. Write a poem in praise of the Sun or sunlight. Make a list first of the benefits the Sun brings us.

OR

2. Make two lists, one headed SCIENCE and the other ART AND MAGIC. Place suitable quotations from the poem under each heading and add comments about them. Write an essay under the heading "Heyrick's Sunbeam; a Seventeenth-Century mixture of Science and Magic."