

Edward Taylor  
(1645-1729)

## OUR INSUFFICIENCY TO PRAISE GOD SUITABLY FOR HIS MERCY

Should all the world so wide to atoms fall,  
Should th' air be shred to motes; should we  
See all the earth hacked here so small  
That none could smaller be?  
Should heaven and earth be atomized, we guess  
The number of these motes were numberless.

But should we then a world each atom deem,  
Where dwell as many pious men  
As all these motes the world could teem,  
Were it shred into them?  
Each atom would the world surmount, we guess,  
Whose men in number would be numberless.

But had each pious man as many tongues  
At singing all together then  
The praise that to the Lord belongs,  
As all these atoms men?  
Each man would sing a world of praise, we guess,  
Whose tongues in number would be numberless.

And had each tongue, as many songs of praise  
To sing to the Almighty All;  
As all these men have tongues to raise  
to him their holy call?  
Each tongue would tune a world of praise, we guess,  
Whose songs in number would be numberless.

Nay, had each song as many tunes most sweet,  
Or one intwisting in't as many,  
As all these tongues have songs most meet  
Unparalleled by any?  
Each song a world of music makes, we guess,  
Whose tunes in number would be numberless.

Now should all these conspire in us, that we  
Could breathe such praise to thee, Most High:  
Should we thy sounding organs be  
to ring such melody?  
Our music would the world of worlds outring,  
Yet be unfit within thine ears to ting.

Thou didst us mold, and us new-mold when we  
Were worse than mold we tread upon.  
Nay, nettles made by sin we be:  
Yet hadst compassion.  
Thou hast plucked out our stings; and by degrees  
Has of us, lately wasps, made lady bees.

Though e'er our tongues thy praises due can fan,  
A weevil with the world may fly,  
Yea fly away: and with a span  
We may out mete the sky.  
Though what we can is but a lisp, we pray  
Accent thereof. We have no better pay.