Carpe Diem for AP Lit

The most famous of Horace's odes uses agricultural metaphors to urge us to embrace the pleasures available in everyday life instead of relying on remote aspirations for the future—hence his immortal motto “Carpe Diem”, or “pluck the day”:

Tu ne quaesieris—scire nefas—quem mihi, quem tibi  
finem di dederint, Leuconoë, nec Babylonios  
temptaris numeros. ut melius, quicquid erit, pati!  
seu plures hiemes, seu tribuit Iuppiter ultimam,  
quae nunc oppositis debilitat pumicibus mare  
Tyrhenum. Sapias, vina liques, et spatio brevi  
spem longam reseces. dum loquimur, fugerit invida  
aetas: carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.

Ask not—we cannot know—what end the gods have set for you, for me; nor attempt the Babylonian reckonings Leuconoë. How much better to endure whatever comes, whether Jupiter grants us additional winters or whether this is our last, which now wears out the Tuscan Sea upon the barrier of the cliffs! Be wise, strain the wine; and since life is brief, prune back far-reaching hopes! Even while we speak, envious time has passed: pluck the day, putting as little trust as possible in tomorrow.

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| **Ode 11 from the First Book of the Odes of Horace** |
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| **The Original Carpe Diem Poem** |
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| **To Leuconoe.**        *“Tu ne quaestoris.”*  Strive not, Leuconoë, to know what end The gods above to me or thee will send; Nor with astrologers consult at all, That thou mayst better know what can befall; Whether thou liv’st more winters, or thy last Be this, which Tyrrhen waves ’gainst rocks do cast. Be wise! drink free, and in so short a space Do not protracted hopes of life embrace, Whilst we are talking, envious time doth slide: This day’s thine own; the next may be denied.  *translated by Sir Thomas Hawkins (1625) from The Chandos Classics edition of***Horace: The Odes, Epodes, Satires and Epistles, translated by the most eminent English scholars and poets** |

**Robert Herrick.**

**1591–1674**

**TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME.**

1. GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may,
2. Old Time is still a-flying:
3. And this same flower that smiles to-day
4. To-morrow will be dying.
5. The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
6. The higher he's a-getting,
7. The sooner will his race be run,
8. And nearer he's to setting.
9. That age is best which is the first,
10. When youth and blood are warmer;
11. But being spent, the worse, and worst
12. Times still succeed the former.
13. Then be not coy, but use your time,
14. And while ye may, go marry:
15. For having lost but once your prime,
16. You may forever tarry.

Carpe Diem

William Shakespeare

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?

O stay and hear! your true-love's coming

That can sing both high and low;

Trip no further, pretty sweeting,

Journey's end in lovers' meeting--

Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;

Present mirth hath present laughter;

What's to come is still unsure:

In delay there lies no plenty,--

Then come kiss me, Sweet and twenty,

Youth's a stuff will not endure.

**Andrew Marvel (1621-1678)**

**To His Coy Mistress**

1. Had we but world enough, and time,
2. This coyness, Lady, were no crime
3. We would sit down and think which way
4. To walk and pass our long love's day.
5. Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
6. Shoulds't rubies find: I by the tide
7. Oh Humber would complain. I would
8. Love you ten years before the Flood,
9. And you should, if you please, refuse
10. Till the conversion of the Jews.
11. My vegetable love should grow
12. Vaster than empires, and more slow.
13. An hundred years should go to praise
14. Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
15. Two hundred to adore each breast,
16. But thirty thousand to the rest.
17. No age at least to every part,
18. And the last age should show your heart.
19. For, Lady, you deserve this state,
20. Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear

1. Time's wing'ed chariot hurrying near
2. And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.

1. Thy duty shall no more be found,
2. Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
3. My echoing song: then worms shall try
4. That long preserved virginity.
5. And your quaint honour turn to dust,
6. And into ashes all my lust.
7. The grave's a fine and private place,
8. But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue

1. Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
2. And while thy willing soul transpires
3. At every pore with instant fires,
4. Now let us sport us while we may,
5. And now, like amorous birds of prey,
6. Rather at once our time devour
7. Than languish in his slow-chapt power
8. Let us roll all our strength and all
9. Our sweetness up into one ball,
10. And tear our pleasures with rough strife
11. Through the iron gates of life
12. Thus though we cannot make our sun
13. Stand still, yet we will make him run.

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Robert Frost

CARPE DIEM

Age saw two quiet children  
Go loving by at twilight,  
he knew not wether homeward,  
Or outward from the village,  
Or (chimes were ringing) churchward,  
He waited (they were strangers)  
Till they were out of hearing  
To bid them both be happy.  
"Be happy, happy, happy,  
And seize the day of pleasure."  
The age-long theme is Age's.  
Twas Age imposed on poems  
their gather-roses burden  
To warn against the danger  
that overtaken lovers  
From being overflooded  
With happiness should have it  
And yet not know they have it.  
But bid life seize the present?  
It lives less in present  
Than in the future always,  
Ans less in both together  
than in the past. The present  
Is too much for the senses,  
Too crowding, too confusing-  
Too present to imagine.