At the Round Earth’s Imagined Corners

From: Holy Sonnets, by John Donne

At the round earth's imagined corners blow
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
From death, you numberless inﬁnities
Of souls, and to your scattered\(^1\) bodies go,
All whom the ﬂood\(^2\) did, and ﬁre shall o'erthrow\(^3\),
All whom war, dearth\(^4\), age, agues\(^5\), tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance hath slain\(^6\), and you, whose eyes
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space\(^7\),
For, if above all these, my sins abound,
'Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace,
When we are there; here on this lowly ground,
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good
As if thou hadst sealed\(^8\) my pardon\(^9\), with thy blood.
Activities

Comprehension questions:
1. What is the general theme of the sonnet?
2. Who is Donne addressing to in the octave, and in the sestet?
3. What are the possible reasons for death listed by Donne?
4. What are the actions made by the angels and by the souls?
5. How can we divide the poem into two parts and what idea does each part convey?
6. What does the word BUT introduce?
7. What do there and here in line 12 refer to?

Analyse the writing technique and the language.
8. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem and what does it correspond to?
9. What kind of lines does Donne employ, self-contained or run-on-lines?
10. What musical devices does the writer use?
11. What is their function?
12. What semantic area does the vocabulary belong to?
13. Quote Donne’s words for the following expressions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Donne’s words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The parts of the bodies around the world as dust and bones</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Deluge</td>
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<td>God would destroy the earth by fire, among other things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delay the day of the judgement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ’s death on the cross purchased an offer of pardon for mankind</td>
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</tbody>
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14. What strikes the reader in the very first line?
15. Which words in the final sestet reveal that Donne is more centred on himself?

The context
17. Why does he employ the sonnet?