

# The Four Ages of Man & Farewell to Atheism

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (December 2022)



*The Four Ages of Man*, Valentin de Boulogne, 1626-28

## The Four Ages of Man

Supply a boy inside a college dorm  
With unexpected capital, and he  
Will spend it with adroitness on some form  
Of rash, adventurous debauchery.

When he enjoys an unexpected win,  
The callow newlywed, however, is  
Fine, even half-enthused, to spend it in  
Establishing the home that shall be his.

In middle age, he'll use it to replace  
The sump pump or another of those shrewd  
Things which, though costly, *do* maintain the grace  
To be invisible—until they're screwed.

The final stop on this appalling course:  
Exhausting all his savings on divorce.

### Farewell to Atheism

I've let Shakespeare figure out  
How Untimely Virtue can,  
Mixed with Frailty & Doubt,  
Make a Unity of Man.

I've let Socrates decide  
Which hydraulical volute  
Best would regulate the tide  
Human Love must constitute.

I've let Milton's crowded brow,  
Stiffened with a heavy THUS,  
Heavily determine how  
I'll define the Serious.

But it seemed unblemished sense,  
When I faced the most profound  
Questions of Life's battleground,  
To repose my confidence ...  
In Christopher Hitchens.

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Jeffrey Burghauser is a teacher in Columbus, OH. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have appeared (or are forthcoming) in *Appalachian Journal*, *Fearsome Critters*, *Iceview*, *Lehrhaus*, and *New English Review*. Jeffrey's book-length collections are available on [Amazon](#), and his website is [www.jeffreyburghauser.com](http://www.jeffreyburghauser.com).

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