

ELEMENTS OF POETRY

Types of Poetry

Lyric: subjective, reflective poetry with regular rhyme scheme and meter which reveals poet's thoughts and feelings to create a single, unique impression.

Matthew Arnold "Dover Beach"
Emily Dickenson "Because I Could Not Stop for Death"
Andrew Marvell "To His Coy Mistress"

Narrative: non-dramatic, objective verse with regular rhyme scheme and meter which relates a story or narrative.

Sonnet: a rigid 14-line verse form, with variable structure and rhyme scheme according to type

Shakespearean (English) Sonnet- three quatrains and concluding couplet in iambic pentameter, rhyming **abab cdcd efef gg** or **abba cddc effe gg**. The Spenserian sonnet is a specialized form with linking rhyme **abab bcbc cdcd ee**.

Italian (Petrarchan) Sonnet - an octave and sestet, between which a break in throughout occurs . The traditional rhyme scheme is **abba abba cde cde (or -cdcdcd)**.

Ode: elaborate lyric verse which deals seriously with a dignified theme:

John Keats "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
Percy Bysshe Shelley "Ode to the West Wind"
William Wordsworth "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood"

Aspects of Poetry

Tone: author's attitude toward his audience and toward his subject

Theme: author's major idea or meaning

Dramatic Situation: the circumstances of the speaker

Blank Verse: unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter.

John Milton "Paradise Lost"
William Shakespeare "Macbeth"
Robert Frost "Mending Wall"

Free Verse: Unrhymed lines **without** regular rhyme scheme.

Walt Whitman "The Last Invocation"

Epic: a long, dignified narrative poem which gives the account of a hero important to his nation

Lord Byron "Don Juan"
John Milton "Paradise Lost"

Homer "The Illiad" "The Odyssey"

Dramatic Monologue: a lyric poem in which the speaker addresses himself to persons around him; his speech deals with a dramatic moment in his life and manifests his character.

Robert Browning "My Last Duchess"
T.S. Eliot "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Elegy: a poem of lament, meditating on the death of an individual.

W.H. Auden "In Memory of W. B. Yeats"
Theodore Roethke "Elegy for Jane"
Thomas Gray "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"

Ballad: simple, narrative verse which tells a story to be sung or recited; the folk ballad is anonymously handed down, while the literary ballad has a single author.

John Keats "La Belle Dame sans Merci"

Idyll: lyric poetry describing the life of the shepherd in pastoral, idealistic terms.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Idylls of the King"
William Wordsworth, "The Solitary Reaper"

Light Verse: general category of poetry written to entertain, such as **lyric poetry, epigrams, and limericks**. It can also have a serious side, as in **parody or satire**.

Rhyme Scheme: pattern of rhymes within a unit of verse; in analysis, each end rhyme-sound is represented by a letter.

Take, O take those lips away, --**a**
That so sweetly were forsworn; --**b**
And those eyes, the break of day, --**a**
Lights that do mislead the morn; --**b**
But my kisses bring again, bring again; --**c**
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd in vain. --**c**
(William Shakespeare, "Take, O Take Those Lips Away")

Masculine Rhyme: rhyme in which only the last, accented syllable of the rhyming words correspond exactly in sound; most common kind of end rhyme.

She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.
(Lord Byron, "She Walks in Beauty")

Feminine Rhyme: rhyme in which two consecutive syllables of the rhyme-words correspond, the

first syllable carrying the accent; double rhyme.

Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
O the pain, the bliss of dying!
(Alexander Pope, "Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame")

Half Rhyme (Slant Rhyme): imperfect, approximate rhyme.

In the mustardseed sun,
By full tilt river and switchblack sea
Where the cormorants scud,
In his house on stilts high among beaks.
(Dylan Thomas, "Poem on His Birthday")

Assonance: repetition of two or more vowel sounds within a line.

Burnt the fire of thine eyes
(William Blake, "The Tiger")

And I do smile, such cordial light
(Emily Dickinson, "My Life Had Stood, A Loaded Gun")

Consonance: repetition of two or more consonant sounds within a line.

And all is seared with trade; bleared smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares men's smell: the soil
(Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur")

Love, all alike, no season knows, nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time (John Donne, "The Sun Rising")

Alliteration: repetition of two or more initial sounds in words within a line.

Bright black-eyed creature, brushed with brown.
(Robert Frost, "To a Moth Seen in Winter")

He clasps the crag with crooked hands
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Eagle")

Onomatopoeia: the technique of using a word whose sound suggests its meaning.

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard
(Robert Frost, "Out, Out")

Veering and wheeling free in the open
(Carl Sandburg, "The Harbor")

Euphony: the use of compatible, harmonious sounds to produce a pleasing, melodious effect.

I knew a woman, lovely in her bones,

When small birds sighed, she would sigh back at them.
(Theodore Roethke, "I Knew a Woman")

Cacophony: the use of inharmonious sounds in close-conjunction for effect; opposite of euphony.

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On grey paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe;
(Robert Browning, "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister")

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore
(Alexander Pope, "Sound and Sense")

Poetic Devices and Figurative Language

Metaphor: figure of speech which makes a direct comparison of two unlike objects by identification or substitution.

All the world's a stage
(William Shakespeare, As You Like It)

Death is the broom
I take in my hands
To sweep the world clean.
(Langston Hughes, "War")

Simile: a direct comparison of two unlike objects, using like or as.

The holy time is quiet as a nun
(William Wordsworth, "On the Beach at Calais")

And like a thunderbolt he falls
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Eagle")

Conceit: an extended **metaphor** comparing two unlike objects with powerful effect. (It owes its roots to elaborate analogies in Petrarch and to the Metaphysical poets, particularly Donne.)

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do.
(John Donne, "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning")

Personification: figure of speech in which objects and animals have human qualities.

When it comes, the landscape listens,
Shadows hold their breath.
(Emily Dickinson, "A Certain Slant of Light")

Into the jaws of Death.
Into the mouth of Hell.
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade")

Apostrophe: addressing a person or personified object not present.

Little Lamb, who made thee?
(William Blake, "The Lamb")

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
(John Milton, "Samson Agonistes")

Metonymy: the substitution of a word which relates to the object of person to be names, in place of the name itself.

The serpent that did sting they father's life
Now wears his crown.
(William Shakespeare, Hamlet)

A spotted shaft is seen (snake)
(Emily Dickinson, "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass")

Synecdoche: figure of speech in which a part represents the whole object or idea.

Not a hair perished. (person)
(William Shakespeare, The Tempest)

And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fire (homes)
(Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush")

Hyperbole: gross exaggeration for effect: overstatement.

Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
(Andrew Marvell, "To his Coy Mistress")

Our hands were firmly cemented.
(John Donne, "The Ecstasy")

Litotes: a form of understatement in which the negative of an antonym is used to achieve emphasis and intensity.

He accused himself, at bottom and not unveraciously, of a fantastic, a demoralized sympathy with her.
(Henry James, "The Pupil")

Irony: the contrast between actual meaning and the suggestion of another meaning.

a. *Verbal* -- meaning one thing and saying another.

b. *Dramatic* -- two levels of meaning -- what the speaker says and what he means, and what the speaker says and the author means.

c. *Situational* -- when the reality of a situation differs from the anticipated or intended effect; when something unexpected occurs.

Symbolism: the use of one object to suggest another, hidden object of idea.

Imagery: the use of words to represent things, actions, or ideas by sensory description.

Night after Night
Her purple traffic
Stews the land with Opal Bales --
Merchantment--poise upon Horizons --
Dip--and vanish like Orioles!
(Emily Dickinson, "This is the land Where Sunset Washes")

And the may month flaps its glad green leaves like wings
(Thomas Hardy, "Afterwards")

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Eagle")

Paradox: a statement which appears self-contradictory, but underlines a basis of truth.

Oxymoron: contradictory terms brought together to express a paradox for strong effect.

Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
Dove-feathered raven! wolvisish-ravens lamb!
(William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet)

Allusion: a reference to an outside fact, event, or other source.

World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard
(Pythagoras--Greek mathematician; Muses--mythological goddesses of beauty and music)
(William Butler Yeats, "Among School Children")