CHAPTER 9

The Forms and Types of Poetry

Poetry has a pattern that gives the reader pleasure while listening to it. Sometimes sound controls the pattern; sometimes the number of words or the length of the lines determines the forms, its structure and types. Poets use the devices to create the effects of sound, rhythm and beat to please our ears, to hold our attention, to mirror and to reinforce the meaning. The pattern of poetry is more regular than that in ordinary language without these devices poetry becomes prose.

(Guth, 1981, p.687)

Important Devices:

repetition, rhythm, scansion, rhyme, rhyme scheme, stanza pattern and sound effects such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, euphony, cacophony, onomatopoeia, etc. are called prosody - the study of verse structure.

Repetition

Poets often repeat single lines or whole stanzas at intervals to emphasize a particular idea. Repetition is to be found in poetry which is aiming at special musical effects or when a poet wants us to pay very close attention to something. (Alexander, 1967, pp.16-17) as in:

The repetition of the word 'water' in these lines from the Ancient Mariner:

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.

The poet makes us feel how vast the ocean is by repeating the word 'water' over and over again. At the same time he helps us to understand how thirsty the sailors are. For them, water is something that is everywhere and at the same moment nowhere.

Rhythm

Rhythm is the pattern of movement in a piece of writing created by stressed / accented and unstressed / unaccented syllables, by different vowel lengths, by intonation and by repetition.

Rhythm is like the beat in music. In most poetry (especially in the kinds that are not free verse), there is a fixed or regular pattern that can be described as particular types and combinations. Poets vary their rhythm according to their purpose. Rhythm contributes to meaning. The measurement of the rhythm is called **meter. (Perrine, 1963, pp.168-169).**

Meter

Meter is a poetry's rhythm, or its pattern of stressed / accented and unstressed / unaccented syllables in a line. Meter is measured in units of feet : the five basic kinds of metric feet are indicated below. Accent marks indicate. stressed / accented (/) or unstressed / unaccented (˘) syllables. Syllables are marked as stressed or unstressed according to the way the line sounds when read aloud. The most common metrical units in English are the 5 listed below. (Knickerbocker, & Reninger, 1974, p.272)

Types of Metric Foot	Accent / Stress	Example
Iambic	ᴜ /	ᴜ / ba – loon
Trochaic	/ ᴜ	/ ᴜ so - da
Anapestic	ᴜ ᴜ /	ᴜ ᴜ / con-tra-dict
Dactyllic	/ ᴜ ᴜ	/ ᴜ ᴜ ma-ni-ac
Spondaic	/ /	/ ᴜ man-made

1. Iamb or Iambic foot which is a 2 - syllable foot,

ᴜ /

unstressed / stressed e.g. today

ᴜ / ᴜ / ᴜ / ᴜ

whose woods / these are / I think / I know

2. Trochee or Trochaic foot which is a 2 syllable foot,

/ ᴜ

stressed / unstressed e.g. daily

/ ᴜ / ᴜ / ᴜ /

Should you / ask me / whence these / storics

3. Anapest or anapestic foot

ᴗ ᴗ /

unstressed / one stressed e.g. intervene;

ᴗ ᴗ / ᴗ ᴗ / ᴗ ᴗ / ᴗ ᴗ /

The assyrian came down / like a wolf / on the fold,

4. Dactyl or dactylic foot, ---a 3-syllable foot,

/ ᴗ ᴗ

one stressed / 2 unstressed e.g. yesterday;

/ ᴗ ᴗ / ᴗ ᴗ

Take her up / tenderly

5. Spondee or spondaic foot ---

/ /

a 2 stressed syllable foot; e.g. day-break

/ / / / / / ᴗ /

Rocks, caves, / lakes, fens, / bogs, dens / and shades/

Metrical units are the building blocks of lines or verse; lines are named according to the number of feet they contain

Type of Line	Number of Metric Feet
monometer	one foot
dimeter	two feet
trimeter	three feet
tetrameter	four feet
pentameter	five feet
hexameter	six feet
heptameter	seven feet
octameter	eight feet

Lines are therefore described according to the **kind** and **number** of feet they possess. For example, the line used to illustrate iambic meter is called **iambic tetrameter**:

u / u / u / u /
How small / a part / of time / they share

This line is **dactylic dimeter**:

/ u u / u u

Take her up / tenderly

Meter is used to enhance meaning and provide pleasure. Some poetry does not use any regular metre. This type of poetry is often called **free verse**. Rhythm works as an emotional stimulus and can heighten the reader's attention to the poem. The poet, by the choice of metre, adapts the sound of the verse to the content. Some metres are swift others slow, some sound dignified, others child-like. As a general rule, stressed syllables occurring together without intervening unstressed syllables slow the movement of the line. Unstressed syllables occurring together speed it up.

Scansion

Scansion is a system for describing poetic rhythms by dividing the lines into feet, indicating the location of accents, and counting the syllables. That is the analysis of the metrical pattern of a poem so that the types and number of metrical feet in each line are identified often in technical names, such as iambic pentameter or dactylic hexameter, as previously explained. (Holman, et.al. 1986, pp.450-451)

To scan any specimen of verse, we do three things: we identify the prevailing foot, we name the number of feet in a line, if this length follows

any regular pattern, we describe the stanza pattern, if there is one. Suppose we try out our skill on the poem. **"To Lucasta, Going to the Wars"** (Perrine, 1963, pp.164-169)

To Lucasta, Going to the Wars

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honor more.

Richard Lovelace (1618-1658)

Source : (Perrine, 1963, p.99)

The first step in scanning a poem is to read it normally, listening to where the accents fall. In, **"To Lucasta, Going to the Wars"** we immediately run into difficulty, for the first line is highly irregular and we may experience uncertainty as to where the accents fall. Let's pass over it, then, and look for easier lines. The second stanza is more regular than the first. The third stanza appears to be the most regular. So let us begin with it. Lines 9, 11 and 12 go regularly, and we mark them as follows:

U / U / U / U /
Yet thin / in - con / stan / cy / is such /

As you too shall a - dore;

u / u / u / u /
I could / not love / thee, Dear, / so much /

u / u / u /
Loved I / not Hon /or more/

Line 10 might also be marked regularly, but careful reading detects a slightly stronger stress on **too**, though it comes in an unstressed position, than on either of the adjacent syllables. So we mark it:

u / / / u /
As you / too shall / a-dore/

We now see a pattern; this stanza is written in lines of alternating (1,3 - 2, 4), iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. Knowing this, return to the first and second stanza to see if they conform to a similar pattern.

In the second stanza, lines 7 and 8 are regularly and easily marked:

/ u / / u / u /
True, a new mis-tress now I chase,

u / / u u /
The first foe in the field;

u / u / u / u /
And with / a strong / er faith / em - brace /

u / u / u /
A sword / a horse / a shield /

Since we are expecting lines 5 and 6 to conform to the established pattern, a tetrameter and a trimeter line, we mark the divisions in such a way as to keep a predominance in iambic though there are numerous variations :

/ ∪ / / ∪ / ∪ /
True a / new mis / tress now / I chase, /

∪ / / ∪ ∪ /
The first / foe in / the field /

Following the same process of first, marking the accents where we hear them and then dividing the feet so as to yield tetrameter and trimeter lines with the maximum of iambic feet, we get the following for stanza one:

/ ∪ / / / ∪ ∪ /
Tell me / not, Sweet / I am / un - kind /

∪ / ∪ / ∪ /
That from / the nun / ner-y

∪ / / / ∪ / ∪ /
Of thy / chaste breast / and qui / et mind /

∪ / ∪ / ∪ /
To war / and arms / I fly /

However we may say that a certain scansion is right or wrong within certain limits, but beyond these limits there is legitimate room for personal interpretation and disagreement between qualified readers. Some readers might read line 11 and 12 of **"To Lucasta, Going to the Wars"** differently". It need not to be read regularly:

∪ / ∪ / / ∪ ∪ /
I could / not love / thee, Dear, / so much, /

/ / / / ∪ /
Loved I / not hon / or more

Line 6 might more plausibly be marked;

∪ / / ∪ ∪ /
The first / foe / in the field /

Line 6 **'in the field'** is clearly anapestic, leaving a monosyllabic stressed foot (**'foe'**) within the line. It is a principle of English metrics that whenever a monosyllabic foot occurs, an unaccented syllable that would normally accompany the accent in a mechanical scansion may be displaced to the preceding or the following foot. So line 6 might more plausible be marked:

˘ / / ˘ ˘ /
The first / foe in / the field

The uses of rhythm and meter are several. Like the musical repetitions of sound, the musical repetitions of accent can be pleasing for their own sake. In addition, rhythm works as an emotional stimulus and serves, when used skillfully, to heighten our attention and awareness to what is going on in a poem. By his or her choice of meter, and by his skillful use of variation within the metrical framework, the poet can adapt the sound of his or her verse to its content and thus make meter a powerful reinforcement of meaning. Some meters are swifter than others, some slower; some are more lilting than others, some more dignified. The poet can choose a meter that is appropriate or one that is inappropriate to his content. If he or she chooses a swift, lilting meter for a serious and grave subject, the meter will probably act to keep the reader from feeling any real deep emotion. But if he or she chooses a more dignified meter, it will intensify the emotion. In all great poetry meter works intimately with the other elements of the poem to produce the appropriate total effect. However, poetry does not need no be metrical at all. It is simply one resource which the poet may or may not use. (Perrine, 1963, pp.168-169)

Memorize Coleridge's famous **'Metrical Feet'** poem below:

Metrical Feet

/ ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /

Trochee trips from long to short

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /
From long to long in solemn sort

/ / / / / / / / / ∪
Slow spondee stalks; strong foot! Yet ill able

/ ∪ ∪ / ∪ ∪ / ∪ ∪ / ∪
Ever to come up with Dactyl trisyllable.

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /
Iambics march from short to long.

∪ ∪ / ∪ ∪ / ∪ ∪ / ∪ ∪ /
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapests throng

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1778-1834)

Source : (Perrine, 1963, p.179)

Rhyme (Rime)

When two words end with the same sound they are said to rime as in 'greet / seat; cow / how; bend / send; fight / bright.

(Chin, et.al., 2002, p.R10)

Rhyme is the use of matching sounds, the repetition of the stressed / accented vowel sound and any following sounds. The fact that they end with the same letters does not always mean that they rhyme, as in close / lose; death / heath; rough / bough; said / laid. because they end in different sounds.

Rhyme of any kind contributes to the musical quality of poetry. It is perhaps most effective when it contributes not only to sound but also to the development of meaning and mood.

There are many kinds of rhyme, used to achieve different purposes. The principal rhymes are **perfect** and **imperfect**: **the perfect rhyme** Is an exact repetition of sounds the final accented vowels and all following sounds, for example, night / light, heaven / seven. The perfect rhyme involves identity of sound, not spelling for example, "Fix" / sticks; sex / decks

The perfect rhyme is called **masculine** when the rhymed sounds have only one stressed syllable, as in; hat / bat, support / retort.

It is **feminine** (or **double rhyme**) when the rhyme sounds involve two or more syllables, the final syllable being unstressed as in: nightly / brightly; eagerly / meagerly. A special kind of feminine rhyme in which identical stressed syllables are followed by two identical unstressed, rhymed syllables this is known as **triple or multiple rhyme**, as in machinery / scenery ; tenderly / slenderly

A rhyme that has less than exact repetition, not perfect, and has only similarity rather than identity of sound patterns, only the final consonant sounds of the rhyming words are identical, the vowel sounds as well as

initial consonant sounds differ is called **imperfect / approximate, half / near / partial or slant rhyme** as in : soul / oil; mirth / forth.

Half rhyme or **off rhyme** is also a feminine rhyme in which only half of the word rhymes - the accented half, as in lightly / frightful; or the unaccented half as in yellow / willow. Another form of imperfect rhyme is **eye rhyme** or words whose endings are spelled alike, and in most instances were once pronounced alike, but have in the course of time acquired a different pronunciation; it is not really rhyme; it merely looks like rhyme. as in prove / love; daughter / laughter; cough / bough / rough in which modern pronunciation has changed and what was once a true rhyme is no longer, although the eyes see the original likeness.

Rhyme is found in two positions : when the rhyme appears at the end of the line it is. **end rhyme / terminal rhyme**, for example W.H. Davies ' 'Leisure'

What is this life it full of **care**,
We have no time to stand and **stare**

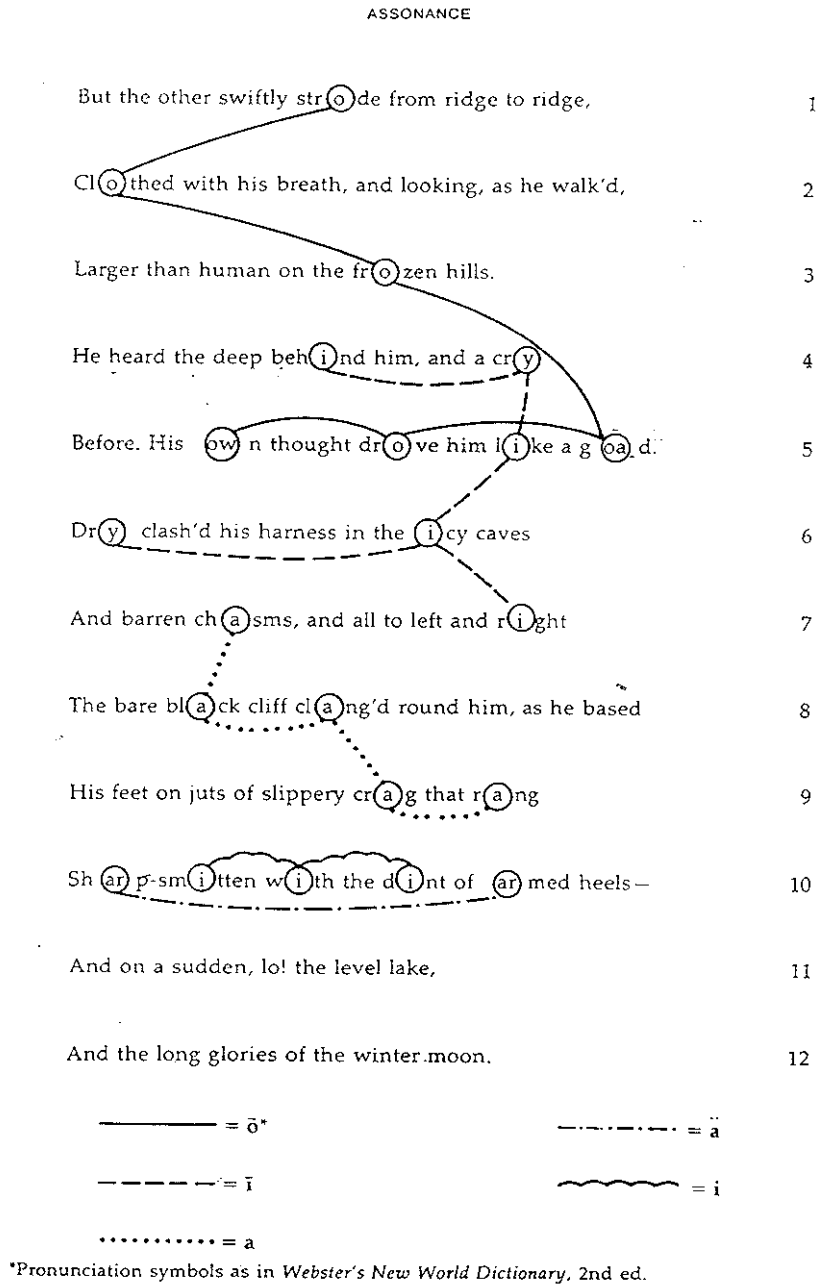
When within the line it is **internal rhyme** as in **Christopher Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd to His Love"**

Come live with **me** and **be** my love.

Poet sometimes use approximate rhyme, called **assonance** when the vowels correspond but the consonants do not (e.g. hat / pass; thin / limp, and consonance rhyme or para-rhyme when the consonants are the same but the vowels differ (e.g. stir / stair; long / lung).

Assonance

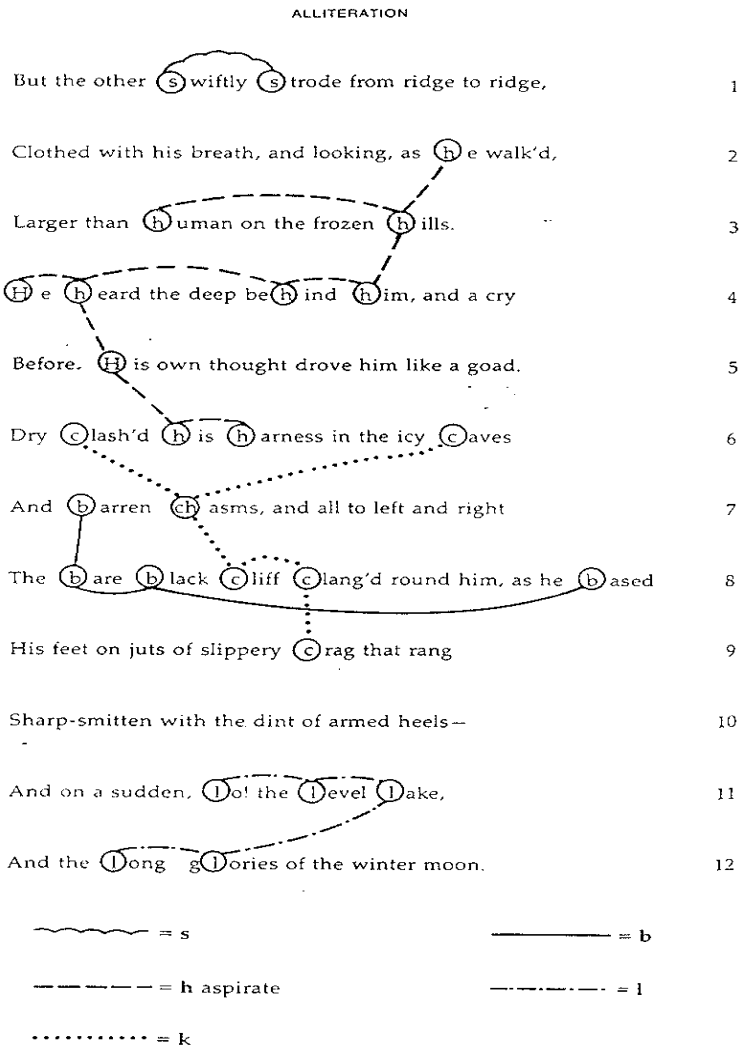
Assonance is the repetition of like vowel sounds. This occurs when a poet introduces imperfect rhymes: ‘wreck’ and ‘rock’, ‘grind’ and ‘ground’, ‘speak’ and ‘bread’ etc. It is often employed deliberately to avoid the jingling sound of too-insistent rhymes that do not fall into a sing song pattern and the lines flow easily. (Roberts, 1978, p.194)



*Pronunciation symbols as in *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 2nd ed.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the same initial consonant sounds of two or more words in a line of verse at frequent intervals e.g. '**s**andal**w**ood, **ce**darwood and s**w**eet **w**hite **w**ine, where the sound 's' and 'w' are repeated. It is often used to emphasize the relationships between words as well as to echo the sense.



Source: (Roberts, 1978, p.195)

Another example:

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,

The furrow followed free.

The repeated **'b'** and **'f's** here make the lines run quickly and give the impression of a ship travelling at high speed.

Further on the line

Day after day, day after day with its repeated **'d'** sound suggests both monotony and immobility.

Another good example of alliteration occurs in **Cargoes**:

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack

The soft '**s**' and hard '**k**' sounds add to the verbal description of the small and dirty coaster which is butting its way across the Channel and even further stress the grace and beauty of movement of the ships that went before.

Rhyme scheme

Rhyme scheme is a pattern or sequence of rhyme, in which the rhyme sounds occur in a stanza or poem. Each rhyme sound is to put the letter 'a' for the word at the end of the first line and then the letter 'a' again for any other final word that rhymes with it later in the poem. Then the letter 'b' for the next final word that does not rhyme with 'a' and the same letter for subsequence rhymes, and then follow on through 'e', 'd', etc. For example, look at these four lines: (Murphy, 1980, pp.5-6)

I met a little cottage girl;
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

Following this plan we put 'a' for 'girl' and 'b, for 'said' because, they do not rhyme, and 'a' again for 'curl' because it rhymes with 'girl', and 'b' again for 'head' because it rhymes with 'said'. Thus, the rhyme scheme of these four lines is a b a b

Not all lines in a poem may rhyme, as in

The sun now rose upon the right;
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
When down into the sea

The rhyme scheme is a b c. It is obvious that the first and third lines do not rhyme. If they do so, we may mark them with 'x'. So the rhyme scheme could be x a x a.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia, (Chin, et.al. 2002, p.R9) another sound device, is the use of words that imitate, represent or suggest the sounds they name; e.g. the buzz of bees; the clink of chains; the hiss of roasted apple. Often the poet chooses words and rhythms that help reader read it in such a way that sound and sense go together. It is used as a kind of figure of speech in which the choice of words conveys a particular meaning or atmosphere, for example using long sounds such as -z-, -th- and -m- to convey lazy or dreamy qualities, or short ones such as –t-, -p- and –k- to convey a sharp or hurried quality, or the repetition of –m- suggests the sound of humming insects in the following line from **Tennyson's, "The Gardener's Daughter" (1842).**

"The lime a summer have of murmurous wings"

Euphony and Cacophony

The poet can choose sounds and group them so that the effect is smooth and pleasant sounding (euphonious) or rough and harsh sounding (cacophonous). A line with a high proportion of vowels is more euphonious than one with many consonants. Liquid consonants (l, m, n, r), semi - vowels (w, y) and 'v' and 'f' are more euphonious than other consonants. The stops (b, d, g, k, p, t) are cacophonous. (Simpson, 1968, pp.350,362)

Sound Patterns

In **'Lost,'** Carl **Sandburg** uses musical devices and sound patterns that are exceptionally helpful as they add to meaning. The poet personifies the fog bound boat as a lost child, and the harbor as a mother.

(Lukens, 1996, p.202)

Desolate and lone
All night long on the lake
Where fog trails and mist creeps,
The whistle of a boat
Calls and cries unendingly,
Like some lost child
In tears and trouble
Hunting the harbor's breast
And the harbor's eyes.

The long sound of the words "calls and cries" are not the only desolate ones since every line echoes the feeling of desolation. The long vowels in "lone", "all", "long", "fog", "traits", and "creeps" give added duration to the words. Sandburg calls the vessel a "boat", its long o adding to the loneliness for more than would the word "ship" with its short I sound.

Consonants are largely liquid l's and r's or nasal m's, n's, and ng's held together with sibilant's. The long vowel duration and the consonants that further pull and stretch the words, called phonetic intensive, create the slow groping of the fog bound ship. The sound of the two lines dealing with "mother," the protective harbour, are quite different. Because vowels are short and decisive, and the words are spoken more swiftly, the effect of the lines is reassuring.

As for rhythm, stressed syllables in "Lost" are far more frequent than unstressed syllables, and the effect is a slowly moving poem, movement like a fogbound boat Sound devices combined with imagery and figurativeness have created a visible and audible scene. The sound has strengthened both the meaning and the impact.

Stanza Pattern

A stanza is a group of lines in a poem. A stanza pattern is determined by the number of lines, the kind of metric feet, the number of metric feet per line and the rhyme scheme. However, the division into stanza is sometimes made according to thought as well as form. Many stanzaic forms are conventional and have their own names they are identified by the number of lines they contain : (Knickerbocker, & Reninger, 1974, pp.269-275)

Couplet:

Couplet is a stanza of two lines with end rhymes. The octosyllabic couplet is iambic or trochaic tetrameter:

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.

Andrew Marvell

Heroic Couplet:

Heroic Couplet is two rhymed iambic pentameter lines; each couplet is usually a complete unit

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be, blessed.

“An Essay on Man”

Triplet or **Tercet** :

Triplet or Tercet is a three-line stanza, usually with one rhyme. The lines may be the same length as in **Robert Herrick’s, “Upon Julia’s Clothes”**

When as in silks my Julia goes
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

or else of varying lengths in **Richard Crashaw's, "Wishes to His Supposed Mistress,"** the lines of each tercet are successively in iambic dimeter, trimeter, and tetrameter:

Who e' er she be
That not impossible she
That shall command my heart and me.

Terza rima

Terza rima is a three - line stanza, is composed of tercets which are interlinked, in that each is joined to the one following by a common rhyme: a b a /b c b/ c d c and so one, as in **"Ode to the West Wind"**

O wild west wind, thou breath of Autumn's being a
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead. b
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, a

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, b
Pestilence - stricken multitudes: O Thou, c
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed b
The winged seeds, whore they lie cold and low, c
Each like corpse within its gave, until d
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow c

Quatrain

Quatrain is a four - line stanza, rhymed or unrhymed. The **heroic (or elegiac) quatrain)** is iambic pentameter, rhyming a-b a-b. That is, the first and third lines rhyme (so they are designated a) and the second and fourth lines rhyme (so they are designated b)

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, a
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea, b
The plowman homeward plods his weary way, a
And leaves the world to darkness and to me. b

Ballad stanza:

Ballad stanza is a four-line iambic, alternately, tetrameter and trimeter, rhyming a-b c-

b, as in, **"Sir Patrick Spens"**

The king sits in Dumferling toune, a
Drinking the blude-reid wine; b
"O whar will I get guid sailor, c
To sail this schip of mine? b

(Alexander, 1967, pp.38-41)

Sonnet

Sonnet is a fourteen-line poem, predominantly in iambic pentameter. The rhyme is usually according to one of two schemes. **The Italian (or Petrachan) sonnet** has two divisions : The first eight lines (rhyming abba abba) are the **octave**, the last six rhyming cd cd cd, if two rhyme are used or cde cde if three rhymes are used are the **sestet**. The **octave** and **sestet** are separated by a break in thought: a general statement made in the octave is illustrated or amplified in the sestet.

On His Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

John Milton (1608-1674)

Source : (Perrine, 1963, p.118)

The second kind of sonnet, the **English or Shakespearean sonnet**, is usually arranged into three quatrains and a rhyming couplet, rhyming

abab c-d c-d efef g-g. The poet may give three examples - one in each quatrain and draw a conclusion in the couplet..

Since There's No Help

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part.
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we met at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of **Love**'s latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, **Passion** speechless lies,
When **Faith** is kneeling by his bed of death,
And **Innocence** is closing up his eyes,
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

Michael Drayton (1563-1631)

Source : (Perrine,1963, p.140)

Cinquain or quintet or quintain

Cinquain or quintet or quintain is a five-line stanza - can have any rhyme scheme or it can be unrhymed. A common example is any limerick. Here is an example of a quintet from **John Masefield's, "Cargoes"** (1902):

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Sestet or sextet

Sestet or sextet is a six - line poem or stanza – it is also the last six line division of an Italian sonnet. Following the eight line division (octave) the sestet usually makes specific a general statement that has been presented in the octave or indicates the personal emotion of the poet in a situation that the octave has developed. The most authentic rhyme scheme is the cdecde (following the abba abba of the octave), and the next best is cdcdcd, as in

O hark, O hear, how thin and dear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and sear
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying

Rime Royal or septet

Rime Royal or septet is a seven-line iambic pentameter stanza, rhyming a b a b b c c, as in

When they lad sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence.
To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence:
Which being done with speedy diligence,
The Romans plausibly did give consent
To Tarquin' s everlasting banishment.

Ottava Rima

Ottava Rima is a an eight - line iambic pentameter stanza, rhyming a b a b a b cc

But words are things, and a small drop of ink
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper - even a rag like this
Survives himself, his to tomb, and all That's his!

Spenserian Stanza

Spenserian stanza consists of nine lines, the first eight in iambic pentameters and the last in iambic hexameter, rhyming a b a b b c b c c, as in

A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Y-cladd in mightie armes and silver shield,
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
The cruell makes of many'a bloudy fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his forcing bitt,
As much disdaying to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemed, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fieree encounters fitt.

Blank verse or unrhymed iambic pentameter

Of all verse forms, the metrical line of blank verse seems closest to fit best, to the natural rhythms of English speech, yet the most flexible and adaptive to diverse levels of discourse; as a result it has been more frequently and variously used than any other type. Since it is the easiest form to write, the poet only has to obey the rule that is, his lines should each contain five iambic feet; it helps avoid a dull, mechanical monotony by various devices, (Simpson, 1968, p.349) as shown by example; from **John Milton's, "Paradise Lost" (Book I, lines 1-10).**

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chos……

Source : (Barnet, et.al. 1988, p.725)

Free Verse

A free verse has no regular exact rhythm or meter; the verse that does not conform to conventional forms of structure and organization such as metrical feet, rhyme and stress patterns. Instead it has lines of varying length and uses the more natural cadences of everyday speech to gain its rhythm. The structure of free verse is the result of free choice by the poet on matter such as vocabulary selection and order, arrangement of lines and

the use of devices such as rhyme and alliteration. Free verse is a fairly modern prosodic development, has been, and continues to be, widely used in the present century because poets want more freedom of structure. Therefore, the pattern is often largely based on repetition and parallel grammatical structure. (Ruse, & Hopton, 1992, p.124)

Here is an example of **Whitman's free verse**:

I Hear America Singing

I hear America Singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be, blithe and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat,

The deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission, or at sundown,

The delicious singing of the mother, or the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing of washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,

The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows. Robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Epic

Epic is a long narrative poem on a serious topic centered on deeds or adventures of a heroic or quasi - divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation or the human race. The traditional epics or oral or folk epics of which some were later written down concern the history and legends of a country and include stories and information from many anonymous sources which had developed in the oral traditions of his people during a period of expansion and warfare.

(Chin, et.al. 2002, p.R4)

The epics of the ancient Greek poet Homer, **"The Iliad"** and **"Odyssey"** are the most notable examples and tell the adventures of Achilles and Odysseus. Beowulf, written in Old English and found in the late 10th century, tells of the heroic exploits of Beowulf, king of a tribe living in a region that is now southern Sweden.

Such epics had typical characteristics; a central hero, detailed descriptions of battled and daring adventures, the influence of the supernatural, formal speech and a general dignified tone.

Later epics were deliberately composed by one author and written down; they are referred to as literary, art or secondary epics.

Limerick

Limerick is a form of Light verse or nonsense verse in five anapestic lines rhyming a a b b a, a-lines being trimeter, three feet, rhyme and b-lines dimeter, two feet, rhyme. Sometimes a limerick is written in four lines, but when so composed, the third line bears an internal rhyme and

might easily be considered two lines. (Ruse, & Hopton, 1992, p.166) The most famous limericks are those written in Edward Lear's, **"The Book of Nonsense"** (1846). Here is an example.

There was an old man at the Cape
Who made himself garments of Crape
When asked "will they tear?
He replied "Here and there,"
But they keep such a beautiful shape!

Lyric

Lyric is any fairly short, non-narrative poem like a song which is usually the expression of a mood a state of mind, or a process of thought or feeling.(Alexander, 1967, p.36) as in:

To—

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken:
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Source : (Alexander, 1967, pp.36-37)

The short lyric, "Splinter" is a good example of Sandburg's ability to create original word images.

The voice of the last cricket
across the first frost
is one kind of good-by.
It is so thin a splinter of singing.

“Splinter” is lyrical. The poem consists simply of two sentences. The first is a statement that the voice of the last cricket of autumn is one kind of good bye, implying that there are other kinds. The second sentence is a statement comparing the voice of the last cricket with a “splinter”. Since a splinter is a thin, sharp, broken piece or wood, bone, glass, etc; therefore, the word-image Sandburg presents to us of the voice of the cricket is that of one thin voice out of a multitude of voices, like a splinter off a piece of wood.

Ode

Ode is a long formal, complex lyric poem, that expresses strong serious emotion usually written to commemorate or celebrate some special occasion, object or quality. The term 'ode' connotes certain qualities of both **manner and form**. In **manner** the ode is an elaborate lyric, expressed in language dignified, sincere, and imaginative and intellectual in tone. In **form** the ode is more complicated than most of the lyric types. (Holman, et.al. 1986, pp.341-344)

In English poetry there are three types of odes: The Pindaric, The Horation or homostrophic and the Irregular. Here is an example:

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry be

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Source : (Abrams, et al., 1968, p.416)

Pastoral poem

Pastoral poem is a poem that presents an idealized picture of rural life as in **Christopher Marlow's, "Passionate Shepherd To His Love"**

Elegy

Elegy is a sorrowful and thoughtful lyrical poem, usually the poet's thoughts are about death, or a lament for a person or tragic event. (Elder, 2004, p.326)

Elegy can also refer to a poem written in elegiac couplets or elegiac stanzas. In classical literature, elegy was used with any serious personal theme such as love or war, but was characterized more by its elegiac structure than by its subject - matter. Many fine elegies have been produced in England from medieval times as examples.

Descriptive poem

Poems which describe people or experiences, scenes or objects as in **Andrew Young's, "The Dead Crab," Emily Dickinson's "There's Been a Death," or William Shakespeare's Winter.** (Alexander, 1967, p.23)

Narrative poem

Poems which tell a story. They tend to be longer than other types of poetry but it is comparatively easy to recognize the poet's intention. This kind of poem is like any story. It has a setting, characters, and a plot. As in **George Gordon, Lord Byron's, "The Destruction of Sennacherib."**

(Alexander, 1967, p.29)

Conclusion

Poetry has regular patterns that give us pleasure as we listen to it. Poets repeat and echo sounds to please our ears, to hold our attention and to mirror or reinforce the meaning. Words have rhythm, beat, and sound and the rhythm of poetry is more regular than we hear in ordinary language.

Poems For Further Reading

My true Love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for the other given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;
There never was a better bargain driven.
His heart in me keeps me and him in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own;
I cherish his because in me it bides.
His heart his wound received from my sight,
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart;
For as from me, on him his hurt did light,
So still methought in me his hurt did smart.
Both, equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss:
My true Love hath my heart, and I have his.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1547)

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand' ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come.
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Shakespeare (1755-1827)

A POISON TREE

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright;
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole:
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

William Blake (1757-1827)

To His Coy Mistress

Had we but World enough, and Time,
This coyness Lady were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way.

To walk, an pass our long Loves Day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges side
Should'st Rubies find: I by the Tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood:
And you should if you please refuse
Till the Conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable Love should grow
Vaster than Empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine Eyes, and on thy Forehead Gaze.
Two hundred to adore each Breast:
But thirty thousand to the rest.
An Age at least to every part.
And the last Age should show your Heart.
For Lady you deserve this State;
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Times winged Charriot hurrying near:
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast Eternity?
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble Vault, shall sound
My echoing Song: then Worms shall try
That long preserv'd Virginity:
And your quaint Honour turn to dust;
And into ashes all my Lust.
The Grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hew
Sits on thy skin like morning dew
And while thy willing Soul transpires
At every pore with instant Fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;

And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
Rather at once our Time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapt pow'r
Let us roll all our Strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one Ball:
And tear our Pleasures with rough strife,
Thorough the Iron gates of Life.
Thus, though we cannot make our Sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

The Glories of Our Blood and State

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late,
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.
The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon death's purple altar now,
See where the victor-victim bleeds:
Your heads must come

To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

James Shirley (1596-1666)

Neither Out Far nor In Deep

The people along the sand
All turn and look one way.
They turn their back on the land.
They look at the sea all day.

As long as it takes to pass
A ship keeps raising its hull;
The wetter ground like glass
Reflects a standing gull.

The land may vary more;
But wherever the truth may be –
The water comes ashore,
And the people look at the sea.

They cannot look out far.
They cannot look in deep.
But when was that ever a bar
To any watch they keep?

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,

The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth, and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but your time,
And, while ye may, go marry;
For, having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

Roberts Herrick (1591-1674)

SIR PATRICK SPENCE

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine;
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor,
That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

“O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o’the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

“Mak haste, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne.”
“O say no sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

“Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master
O o That we will cum to harme.”
To weet thair cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a’ the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may thair ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.
O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in thair hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they’ll se thame na mair.

Haf owre, haf owre, to Aberdour,
If’ fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
We the Scots lords at his feit.

Anonymous