

# Poetry

What is it?

What is it not?

(Prose)

1<sup>st</sup> Rule of Poetry:

Rules can be broken,  
**within reason**

Just as James Bond has a  
license to kill, poets have  
**Poetic License**

# Elements: Speaker

- The speaker is the voice or persona of the poem.
- It is not necessarily always the poet.
- Sometimes the poet creates a speaker that is non-human or even an inanimate object.



# Elements: Tone

Tone is the attitude,  
**expressed through the  
language**, that the  
speaker has toward  
his/her/its subject

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Rule of Poetry

Poetry is read aloud much like  
prose:

- Major pauses occur at punctuation and between clauses
- Simply because a line ends, doesn't mean there is a pause

# Basic Poem Types

- Narrative- Tells a story\* (in past tense)
  - Ballad: involves folk hero
  - Epic: involves larger-than life heroes
- Dramatic- A story\*-in-progress
  - Monologue: letter, or prayer
  - Dialogue: conversation
- Lyric- deals with a subject (love, nature, death) but does not have plot

\*Remember the basic elements of a story!!!



# 3rd Rule of Poetry

Poetry must follow the rules of syntax (word ordering system; see grammar section of notes):

Sentences, like cars, are constructed of parts, each part having a function.

If you threw together a car with randomly selected parts into randomly selected positions, would it run?

Why is syntax so important?

Car blue the  
squashed falling was  
piano a by.



# Parts of Speech in English

- Noun= person, place ,thing, idea:
  - *John, Nevada, universe, book, love*
- Verb= action or state of being:
  - *climb, swim, jump, is, flying, writing*
  - Infinitive verbs: *to climb, to swim*
  - a gerund is a verb acting as a noun:  
*I like climbing. Swimming is fun.*
- Auxiliary Verbs= helping verbs:
  - *is- , was- , am-, have/has been-, will-*

# Parts of Speech in English

- Adjective= describes noun:
  - *red, large, shallow, round*
- Adverb= describes verb or adjective:
  - *slowly, quickly, then*
- Pronoun= substitute noun:
  - *he, she, them, it, who, whom, which, that*



# Parts of Speech in English

- Preposition= denotes location, time, relationship: --*on, above, before for, of, to*
- Conjunction= connects words, phrases, clauses: --*if, and, but, than*
- Interjection= conveys emotion: --*Wow! Hooray!*
- Articles= introduce nouns: --*the, a*



# Syntax- Sentence Components

All sentences must have a **subject** and a **predicate**:

**The cacophony of clattering cups in the kitchen**  
**was caused by Karen.**

Sometimes the subject is implied:

(you) Get out of here!

# Syntax- Sentence Components

Clauses: Segments of sentences that contain both a subject and a predicate.

## Independent Clauses and *Dependent Clauses*:

- *After she eats, she does the dishes.*
- *She didn't see the person *who broke her doll.**
- *Chewing with her mouth open is the reason *why Fred cannot stand sitting across from his sister Melanie.**
- *She cried a little because she wanted a new one.*

Independent Clauses are joined by coordinating conjunctions like *because, although, since, even though*, and standard conjunctions *and, but, for, or*



# Syntax- Sentence Components

Phrases:

Segments of sentences that are missing either a subject or a predicate, or both.

Noun Phrase: **My coach** is happy .

Verb Phrase: The team **is in the middle of playing** a game.

Adjective Phrase: It was a **very close and exciting** game.

Adverbial Phrase: I scored the goal **very quickly**.

Prepositional Phrase: Dad was happy **about the goal**.



# Phrases and Clauses

The bear attacked as he was walking through the woods.

(Dependent clause following independent clause)

The well kept house nevertheless fails to sell in the current economy.

(noun phrase; verb phrase; prepositional phrase)

# Parts of Speech & Sentence Components

A delicately arranged bouquet  
of flowers welcomed visitors  
to the front desk, but the  
clerk, who was allergic,  
detested it.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Rule of Poetry

Poems effectively use words  
to convey meaning-

-What's a poem without  
words?-



# Rhetoric

The use of language (words) to convey meaning, ideas, prove a point, make a case, etc.

# Rhetorical Figures

Simile- a direct comparison, using linking words such as like, as, than

– *Right as rain; older than sin*

Personification- giving human characteristics to the non-human.

– *Fear came knocking at the door*

# Rhetorical Figures

Metaphor- a comparison between two vastly different things, that have a commonality that is the focus of the comparison

*– Her courage was a rock during that difficult time*



# Rhetorical Figures- metaphors

- Extended metaphor- carried through many lines
  - *All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. (Shakespeare's As You Like It)*
- Implied metaphor- comparison is subtle
  - *Moriarty slithered away from the crime scene*
- Synesthetic cross-sensory metaphor
  - *Loud colors; sweet-smelling; light music*
- Synecdoche- one part standing for the whole
  - *I like your wheels, man!* [wheels = car] or *All hands on deck!* [hands = sailors]
- Metonymy- the whole standing for a part
  - *the White House has no comment on that*



# Rhetoric: Imagery

- Imagery is the use of sensory information in the poem.
- Imagery puts the reader in the poem. It helps the reader to “experience” the poem.



# Imagery

Sensory details draw upon the senses:

- Sight: visual imagery
- Sound: auditory imagery
- Taste: gustatory imagery
- Smell: olfactory imagery
- Touch: tactile imagery





# Imagery

Don't forget the other senses!!!

- Organic imagery: Internal, which includes pain, thirst, fatigue
- Kinesthetic imagery: Vestibular and proprioceptive senses, including balance, acceleration, and equilibrium

# Rhetoric: Diction

- DENOTATION- the dictionary definition of a word
- CONNOTATION- the implied meaning, the feeling or impression associated with a word

# Rhetoric: Connotation

Eloise's new outfit clearly **exposes** her **skinny** frame.

Eloise's new outfit clearly **exhibits** her **slender** frame.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Rule of Poetry

Poems effectively use sound  
to convey meaning-

Poetry is not a silent art form!!!

# Sound has nothing to do with spelling!

English Alphabet (26 letters) :

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

English  
Phonemes

(44 total):

ɪ READ	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	u: TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY		
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜ: WORD	ɔ: SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO	
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑ: PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW	
p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

# Sound Devices

- Alliteration - repetitive initial phonemes in words of a line of poetry
- Consonance - repetition of consonant phonemes anywhere in a line of poetry
- Assonance - repetitive vowel phonemes



# Sound Devices

Onomatopoeia – use of words that make the sound they are representing.

Pop, crash, bang, slap

# Onomatopoeia by Eve Merriam

The rusty spigot  
sputter,  
utters  
a sputter,  
spatters a  
smattering of drops,  
gashes wider;  
slash,

splatters,  
scatters,  
spurts,  
finally stops sputtering  
and splash!  
gushes rushes splashes  
clear water dashes.

# Sound Devices

- Poems also create music through the repetition of words and lines.
- Refrain- the repetition of a line
- Chorus- the repetition of several lines of poetry



# Rhyme

Exact rhyme are words that have the exact same-sounding ending, like **cat** and **hat**

Slant rhyme words sound similar, but aren't exact, like **one** and **down** or **seen** and **neat**

# Sound- Rhyme

- Internal Rhyme- rhyming words within a line
- End rhyme - rhyming words at ends of lines
- Couplet- 2 consecutive lines with the same end rhyme

# Rhyme Scheme- the pattern of

end rhyme, denoted using letters ABCD etc.

Look for other sound devices used here.

The splendor falls on castle walls

A

And snowy summits old in story;

B

The long light shakes across the lakes,

C

And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

B

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,

D

Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

D



# Sound

Rhythm: the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line, marked by feet.

Meter: the number of feet in a line.

(the measurement of poetry)

# Metrical Feet in Poetry

<b><u>iamb</u></b>	2	Second syllable is stressed	<b>u /</b> goodbye
<b><u>trochee</u></b>	2	First syllable is stressed	<b>/ u</b> awful
<b><u>anapest</u></b>	3	Third syllable is stressed	<b>u u /</b> Halloween
<b><u>dactyl</u></b>	3	First syllable is stressed	<b>/ u u</b> wonderful
<b><u>spondee</u></b>	2	Two consecutive stressed syllables	<b>/ /</b> big deal
<b><u>pyrrhic</u></b>	2	Two consecutive unstressed syllables	<b>u u</b> (no such word in English)

# Feet per line in poetry scansion:

<b>Monometer</b>	1	<b><u>Pentameter</u></b> *	5
<b>Dimeter</b>	2	<b>Hexameter</b>	6
<b><u>Trimeter</u></b> *	3	<b>Heptameter</b>	7
<b><u>Tetrameter</u></b> *	4	<b>Octameter</b>	8

\* Common to poetry written in English.



# Sound

Scansion: describing the rhythms of poetry by marking (see examples) the locations of

- stressed ( / ) and
  - unstressed ( U ) syllables,
  - dividing the lines into feet ( I ) and
  - counting the feet.
- ← Finding the rhythm
- ← Measuring the rhythm

The entire process is called scanning a poem.

Sound

# Caesura

A pause within a line of poetry ;  
contributes to the rhythm of the  
line. Marked in scansion by ||

# From *Julius Caesar*

It must be by his death and for my part

I know no personal cause to spurn at him

But for the general. He would be crowned.



# From *Julius Caesar*

u / u / u / u / u /  
It must be by his death and for my part

u / u / u / u / u /  
I know no personal cause to spurn at him

/ / u / uu || u / u /  
But for the general. He would be crowned.

# 6<sup>th</sup> Rule of Poetry

Poems have some semblance  
of form...

Poems follow rhyme, rhythm, or line  
grouping patterns

But remember Rule #1:  
Fixed Form versus Free Verse

# Structure

Patterns in poetry  
that give a poem  
its form.



# Structure

Stanza – grouping of lines in poetry

- A stanza in poetry is like a paragraph in prose.

# Structure in Poetry

- Couplet- 2 consecutive lines with the same end rhyme
- Tercet- 3 line pattern
- Quatrain- 4 line pattern
- Quintet- 5 line pattern
- Sestet- 6 line pattern
- Septet- 7 line pattern
- Octave- 8 line pattern

# Fixed Forms

- Poems are categorized by the pattern of its lines, meter, rhythm, or stanzas
- Fixed form poems may not always fit into categories **precisely**, because poets sometimes vary traditional forms to create innovative effects



# Fixed Forms

- Sonnet – “Little Song”

Sonnets propose a situation, attitude, or problem that is resolved at the volta

- Italian (Petrarchan)

- abbaabba **then** cdecde or cdcdcd or cdccdc

- English- always end with a couplet

- Elizabethan- abab cdcd efef gg
- Spenserian- abab bcbc cdcd ee

# Fixed Forms

- Sestina- 6 sestets + 1 tercet;  
six keywords repeated at ends of  
lines and twice in each line of tercet
- Villanelle- 5 tercets + 1 quatrain;  
line 1 refrained at lines 6, 12, 18;  
line 3 refrained at lines 9, 15, 19
- Limerick- light subjects; aabba;  
lines 1,2,5= 3 feet; 3,4= 2 feet  
1 iamb + 2 anapests ; 1 iamb, 1 anapest

# Limerick

There was an old person of Cromer  
Who stood on one leg to read Homer.  
When he found he grew stiff  
He jumped over the cliff,  
Which concluded that person of Cromer.



# 7<sup>th</sup> Rule of Poetry

Poetry must have some message that is universally applicable (THEME)

Otherwise, why would it appeal to others besides the poet?

# Poetry Explication

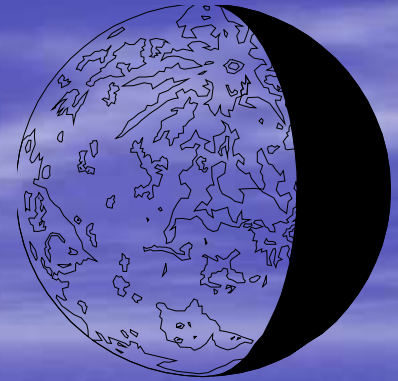
Basic Requirements  
for discussion:

A piece of  
writing that  
explains in  
detail the  
intricacies of  
a poem

- THEME
- Situation, Speaker  
& Tone
- Structure & Form
- Sound: rhythm & devices
- Rhetoric: diction & devices

# Silver

Slowly, silently, now the moon  
Walks the night in her silver shoon;  
This way and that, she peers, and sees  
Silver fruit upon silver trees;  
One by one the casements catch  
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;  
Couched in his kennel, like a log,  
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;  
From their shadowy coat the white breasts peep  
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;  
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,  
With silver claws, and silver eye;  
And moveless fish in the water gleam,  
By silver reeds in a silver stream.



—Walter de la Mare





# Sound

**Repetition:**

“silver”

**Alliteration:**

“silver shoon”

**Onomatopoeia:**

“peep”

**Assonance:**

“moon/shoon”

In the poem “Silver,” Walter de la Mare uses repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and assonance to create a particular mood. By repeating the word “silver”, the poet emphasizes the subject of the poem: the moon’s silvery light. Similarly, the alliteration “silver shoon” (2) creates a “shh” sound that imitates the silence described in the poem in which even the dove’s “peep” (9) can be heard. Finally, the assonance in rhymes like “moon” and “shoon” seems to echo the figure of the moon itself, as your mouth must make the shape of an “O” in order to create those sounds.

*Fog*

*The fog comes  
on little cat feet.*

*It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.*

*— Carl Sandburg*



# Rhetoric

Metaphor:

The fog is compared to a cat.

In the poem “Fog,” Carl Sandburg uses a metaphor to describe the mysterious movement of fog. By comparing the fog to a cat, Sandburg suggests that fog moves quietly and stealthily, as he creates the visual image of fog “on silent haunches” (5) looking out over the harbor.



**Autumn Chant-** Edna St. Vincent Millay

**Now the autumn shudders  
In the rose's root.  
Far and wide the ladders  
Lean among the fruit.**

**Now the autumn clambers  
Up the trellised frame,  
And the rose remembers  
The dust from which it came.**

**Brighter than the blossom  
On the rose's bough  
Sits the wizened orange,  
Bitter berry now;**

**Beauty never slumbers;  
All is in her name;  
But the rose remembers  
The dust from which it came**



# STRUCTURE & RHYTHM

Stanzas: 4                      Lines/: 4

Scheme: ABAB (ABCB lines 9-12)

Rhythm : trochaic trimeter

Millay's poem consists of four four-line stanzas. For the most part the rhyme scheme consists of alternating end rhyme; that is, ABAB. A deviation occurs in the third stanza, which is known as a ballad stanza due to its rhyme scheme of ABCB. The rhythm is trochaic trimeter, except that in the second and fourth lines of each stanza the final unstressed syllable is dropped. This variance adds additional rhythm from line to line.