



# Poetry and How To Read It

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## ***Fire and Ice***

by Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

## ***Dreams***

by Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.  
Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

# What Is Poetry?

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**“Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility”**  
**-William Wordsworth**

**“Poetry is the human soul entire, squeezed like a lemon or a lime, drop by drop, into atomic words**

**~Langston Hughes**

**Poetry is the journal of the sea animal living on land, wanting to fly in the air. Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable. Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away. ~Carl Sandburg**

**Poetry (from the Greek "ποίησις", *poiesis*, a "making") is a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or instead of, its apparent meaning.**

# The Form

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## 1. Fixed Form

Categorized by the pattern of its lines, meter, rhythm, or stanzas; a style of poetry that has set rules. Ex: sonnet.

## 2. Free Form

Having neither *regular* rhyme nor *regular* meter. In free verse the writer makes his/her own rules. The writer decides how the poem should look, feel, and sound.

# The Types

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There are three major types of poetry:

**1. Lyric Poetry**

It deals with emotions and is written in a song-like way. Two types of lyric poetry are odes and sonnets.

**2. Narrative Poetry**

It contains story about heroes, culture, or society. Examples of this type are epic and ballad.

**3. Dramatic Poetry**

It is written in verse and is usually meant to be recited. It tells a story or describes an event in a dramatic and interesting way.

# The Structure

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- ❑ The basic unit of poetry is the **line**. It serves the same function as the sentence in prose, although most poetry maintains the use of **grammar** within the structure of the poem.
- ❑ Most poems have a structure in which each line contains a set amount of **syllables**; this is called **meter**.
- ❑ Lines are also often grouped into **stanzas**. The **stanza** in poetry is equivalent or equal to the paragraph in prose. Often the **lines** in a stanza will have a specific **rhyme scheme**.

# The Sound

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**A poem is written to be read aloud. That's why the effect created by sound when it is read is important. Among sound devices employed in poetry are:**

- 1. Rhyme**
- 2. Assonance**
- 3. Consonance**
- 4. Repetition, and**
- 5. Alliteration**

# Rhyme

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Rhyme is the similar sound at the endings of words. There are two types of rhyme:

**1. End rhyme**

Similar sound at the end of a line:

The way a **crow**

Shook down on **me**

The dust of **snow**

From a hemlock **tree** (from *Dust of Snow* by Robert Frost)

**2. Internal rhyme**

Similar sound within a line:

While I nodded nearly napp**ing**, suddenly their came a tapp**ing** (from *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe)



# Rhyme Scheme

- Rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhyming words at the end of each line. Similar endings is presented with similar letter. Example:

## Dust of Snow

by Robert Frost

The way a <b>crow</b>	<b>A</b>
Shook down on <b>me</b>	<b>B</b>
The dust of <b>snow</b>	<b>A</b>
From a hemlock <b>tree</b>	<b>B</b>
Has given my <b>heart</b>	<b>C</b>
A change of <b>mood</b>	<b>D</b>
And save some <b>part</b>	<b>C</b>
Of a day I had <b>rued</b>	<b>D</b>

The rhyme scheme is ABAB CDCD

# Assonance

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❑ The repetition of the vowel sounds followed by different consonants in two or more stressed syllables in a line.

❑ Examples:

As **hi**g**h** as a **ki**t**e** in a **br**ig**h**t **sk**y (repetition of the sound 'ai')

**My** words **li**k**e** **si**l**e**nt rain drops fell (repetition of the sound 'ai')

**Men** **se**ll the **wed**d**ing** **be**lls (repetition of the sound 'e')

If I **blea**t when I **spea**k it's because I just got . . . **Flee** (sound 'ee')

# Consonance

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- ❑ Repetition of internal or ending consonant sounds of words close together in a line.

Currse, bless, me now with yourr fierrce tears, I pray ”

Blow! Bugles! Blow!

windows, doors through, ruthless;

scatter, congregation

- “Beat! Beat! Drums!” by Walt Whitman

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;

Close to the sun in lonely lands;

Ringed with the azure world he stands.

- “The Eagle” by Lord Alfred Tennyson

# Repetition

- ❑ **Repetition is the repeating of words or phrase for emphasis. It conveys feeling of anticipation.**

## *Blow, Bugle, Blow*

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story:  
The long light shakes across the  
lanks,  
And the wild cataract leaps in  
glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild  
echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes,  
dying, dying, dying.

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

From "Blow, Bugle, Blow" by Lord  
Alfred Tennyson

# Alliteration

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- ❑ Repetition of **consonant sounds** at the **beginning** of at least two words in a line of poetry.

## She Walks in Beauty

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**.

The fair **b**reeze **b**lew, the white foam flew,  
The **f**urrow **f**ollowed **f**ree;  
We were the first that ever burst  
Into that **s**ilent **s**ea.

From Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

# The Language

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- ❑ Language used in poetry ranges from ordinary-day-to-day utterance to highly figurative one.
- ❑ In most cases, poetry uses language in connotative level to achieve certain degree of both aesthetic and meaning.
- ❑ Common figurative languages used in poetry are including:
  1. Metaphor
  2. Simile
  3. Personification

# Metaphor

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- ❑ A metaphor is an implied comparison between two unrelated things.
- ❑ In metaphor, comparative words such as “like”, “as”, and “as....as” are not used.
- ❑ Examples:

My love is a red, red rose

All the world's a stage

Our life has been a maze of unsolved passages.

We drink the grail of youth and empty it at once.

Love is Spider

Love is spider

Secretly spinning

In dark corner

Silently it sings

Melodious murder!

From “Love Is spider”

# Simile

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- ❑ A comparison between two usually unrelated things using the word “like” or “as”.
- ❑ Examples:

Her eyes, bright as they are, were glowing **like** eastern stars.

**As** a statue, he sat motionless

We are **like** blades, only sharp when grinded

## *Ars Poetica*

By Archibald MacLeish

A poem should be palpable and  
mute **as** a globed fruit,  
Silent **as** the sleeve-worn stone  
Of casement ledges where the moss  
has grown—  
A poem should be wordless  
**As** the flight of birds.



# Personification

- ❑ Personification means giving human thoughts and qualities to nonhuman objects.
- ❑ More generally, it assigns organic qualities to inanimate objects and ideas.
- ❑ Examples:

*The tree stood tall and proud by the curving path*

*As the cold air climbed up the hill, the chill  
whispered a sad story in my ears.*

*Yellow-brown leaves dance in hot summer wind as  
they fell to the ground.*

## *A Dirge*

Rough wind, that moanest loud  
Grief too sad for song;  
Wild wind, when sullen cloud  
Knells all the night long;  
Sad storm whose tears are vain,  
Bare woods, whose branches  
strain,  
Deep caves and dreary main, -  
Wail, for the world's wrong!

*Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 -  
1822)*

# The Image

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- ❑ An **image** is a word or phrase that appeals to one of our senses. Images can help us create a mental picture, hear a sound, feel texture or temperature, taste a sweet, sour, or salty flavor.
- ❑ In the art of poetry, these images are called **imagery**, that is, language that appeals to the senses.
- ❑ There are six types of imagery based on the senses to appeal:
  - Visual (sight)
  - Auditory (sound)
  - Olfactory (smell)
  - Gustatory (taste)
  - Tactile (touch)
  - Kinesthetic (movement)

# Visual Imagery

❑ **A visual image occurs when a poet or author represents something through sight**

❑ **Examples:**

The lamp post was the lonely figure,  
with its dreary light, against pale sky.

The sea, blue as it is, embraces the  
rolling waves. Furious as they are.

What do you see in those waving  
flags, with blood-red and pure white?

Messy Room  
-Shel Silverstein

Whoever room this is should be ashamed!  
His underwear is hanging on the lamp.  
His raincoat is there in the overstuffed chair,  
And the chair is becoming quite mucky and damp.  
His workbook is wedged in the window,  
His sweater's been thrown on the floor.  
His scarf and one ski are beneath the TV,  
And his pants have been carelessly hung on the door.  
His books are all jammed in the closet,  
His vest has been left in the hall.  
A lizard named Ed is asleep in his bed,  
And his smelly old sock has been stuck to the wall.  
Whoever room this is should be ashamed!  
Donald or Robert or Willie or--  
Huh? You say it's mine? Oh, dear,  
I knew it looked familiar!

# Auditory Imagery

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❑ An auditory image occurs when something is represented through sound or image of sound.

❑ Examples:

Scream, scream the stream are recalling the dreams!

As I whispered, the valley echoed my pain in thunderous rage.

Storms rumbled in distance, fading away and left me in silence.

If trees could talk as we,  
Oh, how they would echo  
Earth's praises;  
If trees could sing as we,  
Gee, how they and we would  
Harmonize a sweet song of  
Spring breezes;

From "If Tree Could Do As We" by  
Frederick Douglas Harper

# Olfactory Imagery

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❑ An olfactory image occurs when a poet or author represents a smell or image of smell

❑ Example:

Odor of her hair was forever haunting. It was morning rose!

United we were by decay, the aroma of death, the perfume of blood.

**Miss Thompson Goes Shopping**  
by Martin Armstrong

*the old strange fragrance filled the air  
a fragrance like the garden pink,  
but tinged with vague medicinal stink  
of a camphor, soap, new sponger, blent,  
with chloroform and violent scent*

# Gustatory Imagery

❑ A gustatory image is the representation of a taste

❑ Examples:

What is this too sweet for the mouth?

Ah. It's a promise!

Sour, sour old age is to devour.

Mama told me not to eat candies  
Sweet they were like plums of Paradise  
“Beware!” she said seriously indeed  
“What pleases your tongue ruins your teeth.”

Mama told me to take the pills  
Looking at them froze me to my heels  
“Take them!” she scared me to death  
“What bitter to in taste serves your health”

From “Candies”

**This Is Just To Say**  
by William Carlos Williams

*i have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the ice box  
and which  
you. were probably  
saving  
for breakfast.  
forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold*

# Tactile Imagery

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❑ A tactile image is the representation of touch or the sensation of touch

❑ Examples:

The ground was so soft, and warm that I wanted to bury my hands forever.

On this coarse wall, painted with memories of ours, I leant my torn back.

The moon was so smooth it slipped from her tiny hand

The hand that held my wrist  
Was battered on one knuckle;  
At every step you missed  
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head  
With a palm caked hard by dirt,  
Then waltzed me off to bed  
Still clinging to your shirt.

From “My Papa’s Waltz” by Theodore Roethke

# Kinesthetic Imagery

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❑ A kinesthetic image is a representation of physical movement

❑ Examples:

March and march we to the grave, some like breeze some like wave.

But too much speed on their hands, for these eyes to attend, tying ropes and sails to mend

## MONGOOSE

Their steps are quick and low,  
Fastly scooting they often go,  
Minding their own business of the day;  
A friend of man and woman they are,  
Kindly and cute animals by far;  
Mongooses, how beautifully they stroll  
Along;  
Mongooses, how beautifully they stroll  
Alone;  
Their brown coat glistening in the sun,  
Creatures of charm on the run.

-Frederick Douglas Harper



# Character, Speaker, Voice

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- ❑ **Characters** are figure implicitly or explicitly mentioned in poem
- ❑ **The speaker** is the voice that speaks behind the scene.
- ❑ **The Speaker** is not necessary the speaker, because sometimes he may be writing from a different perspective, or may be in the **voice** of another race, gender, or even a material object.
- ❑ It usually appears as a **persona** or voice .
- ❑ Example: The speaker in Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken ” is a conflicted person, who does not tell anything about himself. However, the readers of this poem know that he is undergoing a big decision, that he has chosen a single path according to which he is directing his life, and this splits into two options ahead.

## The Road Not Taken

By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

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And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

# Theme and Subject

- ❑ Theme is the main point the author is trying to make with the poem. It is the lesson that readers learn about life after reading a poem. Another way to think of theme is as the "moral" of the poem.
- ❑ The subject of a poem is the topic, or what the poem is literally about. It is through the subject that the theme of a poem is conveyed.
- ❑ Example: The theme of Tennyson's *The Eagle* is the majesty of nature, while the subject is an eagle with its powerful and commanding attribute.

## The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd 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

## O What Is That Sound?

By W.H. Auden

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear  
Down in the valley drumming, drumming?  
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,  
The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear  
Over the distance brightly, brightly?  
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,  
As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear,  
What are they doing this morning, morning?  
Only their usual maneuvers, dear,  
Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there,  
Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?  
Perhaps a change in their orders, dear,  
Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care,  
Haven't they reined their horses, horses?  
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,  
None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want, with white hair,  
Is it the parson, is it, is it?  
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,  
Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer that lives so near.  
It must be the farmer so cunning, so cunning?  
They have passed the farmyard already, dear,  
And now they are running.

O where are you going? Stay with me here!  
Were the vows you swore deceiving, deceiving?  
No, I promised to love you, dear,  
But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,  
O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;  
Their boots are heavy on the floor  
And their eyes are burning.

## Annabel Lee

By Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,  
In a kingdom by the sea,  
That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
By the name of Annabel Lee;  
And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
But we loved with a love that was more than love—  
I and my Annabel Lee—  
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven  
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling  
My beautiful Annabel Lee;  
So that her highborn kinsmen came  
And bore her away from me,  
To shut her up in a sepulchre  
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,  
Went envying her and me—  
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,  
In this kingdom by the sea)  
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,  
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
Of those who were older than we—  
Of many far wiser than we—  
And neither the angels in Heaven above  
Nor the demons down under the sea  
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,  
In her sepulchre there by the sea—  
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

**I'm Nobody! Who are you?**

*By Emily Dickinson*

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Are you – Nobody – too?

Then there's a pair of us!

Don't tell! They'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!

How public – like a Frog –

To tell one's name – the livelong June –

To an admiring Bog!