

Ways to Navigate Poetry

Adapted from *How To Write Poetry* by Paul B. Janeczko



Biotech English 10
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The Writing Process

- Brainstorming: Jotting down ideas, thoughts, feelings
- Drafting
- Editing: Looking over the first draft of your poem and searching for ways to improve it
- Revising: Making improvements
- Publishing: Your poem is complete and ready to be shared!

Ways to Make your Poetry **POP!**

Sound Effects

- **Alliteration:** Repetition of consonants of words
(Ex: Peter Piper picked a peek of pickled peppers, setting sun, totally terrible, far-flung favorite)
- **Onomatopoeia:** a word that makes the sound of the action it describes
- (Ex: thump, bang, honk, bonk, moo, clank, hiss, ring, click)
- **Assonance:** Repetition of vowels in words
(Ex: heat, three, meet)

More Ways...

- **Consonance:** Repetition of the same consonant (internal or ending) two or more times in short succession.
Ex: "I dropped the locket in the thick mud."
- **Rhythm: pattern of accented and unaccented syllables in a line**
 - Iambic Pentameter:
 - **Meter** (sound pattern) in (verse) poetry.
 - **Foot** = basic unit of meter used to describe rhythm. Certain number of syllables forming part of a line of verse. In English, feet are named for the combination of accented and unaccented syllables
 - **Iamb** = metrical foot characterized by a short (unstressed) syllable followed by a long (stressed) syllable.
 - **Iambic Pentameter** consists of 5 iambic feet (pairs of stressed & unstressed syllables)

Poetry Scanning

Writing Rhythm: da DUM

A line of iambic pentameter is five of these in a row:

- Da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM
- We can notate this is with a 'x' mark representing an unstressed syllable and a '/' mark representing a stressed syllable.

In this notation a line of iambic pentameter would look like this:

- x/x/x/x/x/

Non-bold = short syllable

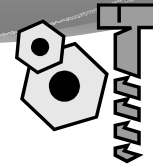
Bold = long syllable

Example:

“To **strive**, to **seek**, to **find**, and **not** to **yield**.” – *Alfred Tennyson*

“If **mu-** / -sic **be** / the **food** / of **love**, / play **on**.” – *William Shakespeare*

Parts of a Poem



- **Refrain:** line or lines repeated in verse (or music), often seen at the end of stanzas; chorus
- **Stanza Forms:**
 - Couplet- two lines of verse with similar end rhymes; two line stanzas with similar grammatical structure & idea complete within itself
 - Quatrain- 4 line stanzas of any kind
 - Ex: “The sense of danger must not disappear:
The way is certainly both short and steep,
However gradual it looks from here;
Look if you like, but you will have to leap.” – W.H. Auden
 - Sestet – 6 line stanza or poem; final six lines of sonnet
 - Octet (Octave) – 8 line stanza or poem; first eight lines of sonnet

Repetition

“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 winged 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 high-born 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 one 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 the sepulchre there by the sea -
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Rhyme

“A rhyme has the repetition of the same or similar sounds at the end of two or more words most often at the ends of lines.” (1)

Approximate (Slant): A partial or imperfect rhyme, often using assonance or consonance only. Also called half rhyme, near rhyme, oblique rhyme and off rhyme

Internal: Occurs within a line

“Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak
and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came
a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
‘Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door -”
Edgar Allan Poe

Blank Verse: any verse comprised of unrhymed lines all in the same meter (like ordinary speech); written in iambic pentameter

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.” – William Shakespeare (“Macbeth”)

Free Verse

- Does not rhyme, but is NOT written in iambic pentameter. Different rhythm throughout. Ex: Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*

Creating Images

You want the reader of your poem to feel like they are there with you and experiencing the event too!

- ❖ Sensory Imagery (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste)
- ❖ Tone (the writer's attitude toward the material/readers. Can be playful, angry, serious, outraged, serene, tender etc.)
- ❖ Mood (feeling or atmosphere implied in poem)

- ❖ **STRONG** verbs
 Ex: Walk → hobbled, sprinted, sauntered, shuffled
 Talk → conversed, chat, whispered, bellowed

- ❖ Adjectives...Does anyone cook?!
 Ex: Blue → indigo, robin egg, sapphire, aquamarine



Word Choice

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is like the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.”

--Mark Twain

Word Choice Cont'd

“Bingo” by Paul B. Janeczko

Saturday night
Dad washed, I dried
the supper dishes
while Mom armed herself
for Early Bird bingo at seven
in the church basement: her lucky piece
(a smooth quarter she'd won the first time out)
seat cushion,
and a White Owls box of pink plastic markers.

Dad read the paper
watched TV with me
until Mom returned,
announcing her triumph with a door slam
and a shout
“I was hot!”

Flinging her hat,
twirling out of her jacket,
she pulled dollar bills
from her pockets
before setting them free
to flutter like fat spring snow.

“Nintey-two dollars! she squealed
as Dad hugged her off the floor.
“Nintey-two dollars!”

In bed I listened to
mumbled voices
planning to spend the money--
on groceries
school clothes
a leaky radiator—
and wished she'd buy
a shiny red dress
long white gloves
and clickety-click high heels.

Figurative Language

Diction: choice of words especially in regard to clearness and effectiveness

Metaphor: describe one thing as if it were something else; something used to represent something else

Ex: The moon, a luminous beacon in the night sky, guided me as I trudged on the dark path through the woods.

Simile: Comparing one thing to another using “like” or “as”

Ex: The sailor was as hungry as a wolf when he finally disembarked the ship after a long journey across the Atlantic.

Personification: Giving human qualities to inanimate objects.

Ex: “The wind howled through the night”
“ The old house groaned in the fierce hurricane”

Other Elements...

- Hyperbole: Exaggeration is made for emphasis or humorous effect
- Enjambment: The running over of a sentence or a thought from one line to another.

*“i carry your heart with me(i carry it in
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling) “ – e.e. cummings*

Why don't poets just say what they mean?

“ Why do stained-glass windows
always block the sun with all those
annoying colors and patterns?”

- Allan Wolf, *Immersed in Verse*

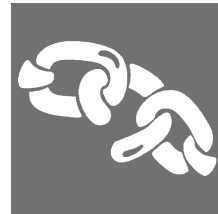
Line Breaks

Literally, a break in a sentence or phrase within a poem where one part of the sentence is continued from one line to the next:

From “Raymond” by Paul B. Janeczko

Hair the color of pencil shavings,
eyes as dark as a night river,
best friend
since fifth grade
when he seemed to stop
growing.

At the Top Hat Café,
gave me one play
on his juke box quarters



Why would I want to break up lines in a particular way anyway?

- ❖ To emphasize a certain word or phrase
- ❖ Carrying a word to the next line can add suspense or surprise to your poem
- ❖ To create a particular visual effect
- ❖ It just feels right!

References

- 1:- Janeczko, Paul B. How to Write Poetry. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1999.
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