

Second Week

I. Music of the Line

II. Rhyme

Practice:

1. Break the following prose into two or three different ways, and explain their different effects.

The cows stand under the trees in the wet grass, lifting their necks to pull leaves down. We slow the truck, pull over to the side of the road to watch them. How graceful they look, how unlike themselves. We get out and lean on the fence. The cows don't seem to notice we are there.

Or

2. Write a poem in blank verse—unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Or

3. Write a free verse poem with a rhyme scheme you've invented.

What she remembers
Is his glistening back
In the bath, his small boots
In the ring of boots at her feet.

WHAT she reMEMbers
Is his GLIStening BACK
In the BATH, his SMALL BOOTS
In the RING of BOOTS at her FEET.

The line too labors, and the words move slow (Pope)

Meter: monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter. . .

Metrical feet:

Iamb - '
Trochee '-
Dactyl ' - -
Anapest - - '
Spondee - - or ' '

Iambic pentameter:

Upon / those boughs/ which shake/ against/ the cold. . .

O, that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a few!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world! --*Hamlet*

Tetrameter:

That floats/ on high/ o'er vales/ and hills

Trimeter:

The whis/ key on/ your breath
Could make/ a small/ boy dizzy

Hexameter:

For o'er/ the south/ ern moors/ I have/ a home/ for thee

Rhyme

The shattered water made a misty din,
Great waves looked over others coming in,
And thought of doing something to the shore
That water never did to land before. --Robert Frost

I'm not afraid of the blade
you've just pointed at my head.
If I were dead, you could take the boy. . . –Ali

Alliteration and assonance

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore (Pope)

We REAL COOL Gwendolyn Brooks

The Pool Players
Seven at the Golden Shovel

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

We real cool.
We left school.

We lurk late.
We strike straight.

We sing sin.
We thin gin.

We jazz June.
We die soon.

Unheard. i breathe
Such clear walls of curved glass
Not my thigh but my throat
And the glass shatters, and the iron sunders

UnHEARD. i BREATHE
Such CLEAR WALLS of CURVED GLASS
Not my THIGH but my THROAT
And the GLASS SHATters, and the IRon SUNders

Here Paul Monette

Everything extraneous has burned away
this is how burning feels in the fall
of the final year not like leaves in a blue
October but as if the skin were a paper lantern
full of trapped moths beating their fired wings

.....

the day has taken you with it and all
there is now is burning dark the only green
is up by the grave and this little thing
of telling the hill I'm here oh I'm here

cf.

Everything extraneous has burned away
this is how burning feels in the fall of the final year
not like leaves in a blue October
but as if the skin were a paper lantern
full of trapped moths beating their fired wings

.....

the day has taken you with it
and all there is now is burning dark
the only green is up by the grave
and this little thing of telling the hill
I'm here oh I'm here.

The Lull Molly Peacock

The possum lay on the tracks fully dead.
I'm the kind of person who stops to look.
It was big and white with flies on its head,
a thick healthy hairless tail, and strong, hooked
nails on its raccoon-like feet. It was a full
grown possum. It was sturdy and adult.
Only its head was smashed. In the lull
that it took to look, you took the time to insult
the corpse, the flies, the world, the fact that we were
traipsing in our dress shoes down the railroad tracks.
"That's disgusting." You said that. Dreams, brains, fur
and guts: what we are. That's my bargain, the Pax
Peacock, with the world. Look hard, life's soft. Life's cache
is flesh, flesh, and flesh.

aabb + details

Piano D.H. Lawrence

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious master of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

Not really rhymed, why?

Arms and the Boy Wilfred Owen

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade
How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood;
Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;
And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-leads
Which long to nuzzle in the hearts of lads,
Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth,
Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple.
There lurk no claws behind his fingers supple;
And God will grow no talons at his heels,
Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls.

Player Piano John Updike

My stick fingers click with a snicker
And, chuckling, they knuckle the keys;
Light-footed, my steel feelers flicker
And pluck from these keys melodies.

My paper can caper; abandon
Is broadcast by dint of my din,
And no man or band has a hand in
The tones I turn on from within.

At times I'm a jumble of rumbles,
At others I'm light like the moon,
But never my numb plunker fumbles
Misstrums me, or tries a new tune.