

Seventh week

I. Free verse

1. Free verse and conversation
2. Iambs and dactyls
3. Enjambment
4. Tone of intimacy, the main style
5. The poet ≠ professor; the poet = fellow-citizen, neighbor, and friend
- ~~6. Poetic diction~~
- ~~7. Cliché~~
- ~~8. Informational language~~
- ~~9. inversion~~
10. Details → experience
11. Variety versus habits

II. Line

1. Beginning, ending, turning, length

III. Prose Poem: usually situations

Practice: Prose poem is too recent a form to have developed a tradition.
Anyway, you may try to write one.

Which is a Free Verse?

From Leaves of Grass Walt Whitman

I think I could turn, and live with animals,
 they are so placid and self-contain'd
I stand and look at them long and long

They do not sweat and whine about their
 condition
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep
 for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their
 duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented
 with the mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that
 lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the
 whole earth.

The Red Wheelbarrow William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

The Fish Elizabeth Bishop

I caught a tremendous fish
and held him beside the boat
half out of water, with my hook
fast in a corner of his mouth
He didn't fight.
He hadn't fought at all.
He hung a grunting weight,
battered and venerable
and homely. Here and there
his brown skin hung in strips
like ancient wallpaper

.....

Beginning, ending, turning, length

We all know what he is.

vs.

When the stars threw down their spears

And water'd heaven with their tears

Did He smile His work to see?

Did He who made the lamb make thee? (William Blake)

Masculine rhyme vs. feminine rhyme

The whiskey on your breath

Could make a small boy dizzy;

But I hung on like death:

Such waltzing was not easy. (Theodore Roethke)

vs.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

Salutation Ezra Pound

O generation of the thoroughly smug

 and thoroughly uncomfortable,

I have seen fishermen picnicking in the sun,

I have seen them with untidy families,

I have seen their smiles full of teeth

 and heard ungainly laughter.

And I am happier than you are,

And they were happier than I am;

And the fish swim in the lake

 and do not even own clothing.

Warning to the Reader Robert Bly

Sometimes farm granaries become especially beautiful when all the oats or wheat are gone, and wind has swept the rough floor clean. Standing inside, we see around us, coming in through the cracks between shrunken wall boards, bands or strips of sunlight. So in a poem about imprisonment, one sees a little light.

But how many birds have died trapped in these granaries. The bird, seeing freedom in the light, flutters up the walls and falls back again and again. The way out is where the rats enter and leave; but the rat's hole is low to the floor. Writers, be careful then by showing the sunlight on the walls not to promise the anxious and panicky blackbirds a way out!

I say to the reader, beware. Readers who love poems of light may sit hunched in the corner with nothing in their gizzards for four days, light failing, the eyes glazed . . .

They may end as a mound of feathers and a skull on the open boardwood floor

Sleep Russell Edson

There was a man who didn't know how to sleep; nod-ding off every night into a drab, unprofessional sleep. Sleep that he'd grown so tired of sleeping.

He tried reading *The Manual of Sleep*, but it just put him to sleep. That same old sleep that he had grown so tired of sleeping . . .

He needed a sleeping master, who with a whip and a chair would discipline the night, and make him jump through hoops of gasolined fire. Someone who could make a tiger sit on a tiny pedestal and yawn . . .

THE STRANGER Baudelaire

Tell me, enigmatic man, whom do you love best? Your father, your mother,
your sister, or your brother?

"I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother."

Your friends, then?

"You use a word that until now has had no meaning for me."

Your country?

"I am ignorant of the latitude in which it is situated."

Then Beauty?

"Her I would love willingly, goddess and immortal."

Gold?

"I hate it as you hate your God."

What, then, extraordinary stranger, do you love?

"I love the clouds--the clouds that pass--yonder--the marvellous clouds."