

# Kealing Magnet 8 Poetry Packet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## Sestina

Elizabeth Bishop

September rain falls on the house.  
In the failing light, the old grandmother  
sits in the kitchen with the child  
beside the Little Marvel Stove,  
reading the jokes from the almanac,  
laughing and talking to hide her tears.

She thinks that her equinoctial tears  
and the rain that beats on the roof of the house  
were both foretold by the almanac,  
but only known to a grandmother.  
The iron kettle sings on the stove.  
She cuts some bread and says to the child,

It's time for tea now; but the child  
is watching the teakettle's small hard tears  
dance like mad on the hot black stove,  
the way the rain must dance on the house.  
Tidying up, the old grandmother  
hangs up the clever almanac

on its string. Birdlike, the almanac  
hovers half open above the child,  
hovers above the old grandmother  
and her teacup full of dark brown tears.  
She shivers and says she thinks the house  
feels chilly, and puts more wood in the stove.

It was to be, says the Marvel Stove.  
I know what I know, says the almanac.  
With crayons the child draws a rigid house  
and a winding pathway. Then the child  
puts in a man with buttons like tears  
and shows it proudly to the grandmother.

But secretly, while the grandmother  
busies herself about the stove,  
the little moons fall down like tears  
from between the pages of the almanac  
into the flower bed the child  
has carefully placed in the front of the house.

Time to plant tears, says the almanac.  
The grandmother sings to the marvelous stove  
and the child draws another inscrutable house.



## Doors

Carl Sandburg

An open door says, "Come in."  
A shut door says, "Who are you?"  
Shadows and ghosts go through shut doors.  
If a door is shut and you want it shut,  
why open it?  
If a door is open and you want it open,  
why shut it?  
Doors forget but only doors know what it is  
doors forget.

## Abandoned Farmhouse

Ted Kooser

He was a big man, says the size of his shoes  
on a pile of broken dishes by the house;  
a tall man too, says the length of the bed  
in an upstairs room; and a good, God-fearing man,  
says the Bible with a broken back  
on the floor below the window, dusty with sun;  
but not a man for farming, say the fields  
cluttered with boulders and the leaky barn.

A woman lived with him, says the bedroom wall  
papered with lilacs and the kitchen shelves  
covered with oilcloth, and they had a child,  
says the sandbox made from a tractor tire.  
Money was scarce, say the jars of plum preserves  
and canned tomatoes sealed in the cellar hole.  
And the winters cold, say the rags in the window frames.  
It was lonely here, says the narrow country road.

Something went wrong, says the empty house  
in the weed-choked yard. Stones in the fields  
say he was not a farmer; the still-sealed jars  
in the cellar say she left in a nervous haste.  
And the child? Its toys are strewn in the yard  
like branches after a storm--a rubber cow,  
a rusty tractor with a broken plow,  
a doll in overalls. Something went wrong, they say.

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# Sound Devices

First, read and discuss the definition of alliteration. Then, read the first poem (*Ode to the West Wind*) out loud. Mark examples of alliteration which are present in the poem. Discuss as a class what you have marked and how it affects the poetry.



Proceed with this model of looking at poetic devices and examples for “assonance” and each other device in succession. You may want to consider the meaning of the poem and why the poet chose those sounds.

**Alliteration:** The repetition of initial consonant sounds. (Peter paid with pounds of pennies; Some say life is simple if not sublime).

**Assonance:** The relatively close juxtaposition of the same or similar vowel sounds, but with different end consonants in a line or passage, thus a vowel rhyme, as in the words, date and fade. (Please heed this only decree, we shall be free)

**Consonance:** Essentially, the repetition of consonant sounds. A pleasing combination of sounds; sounds in agreement with tone. Also, the close repetition of the same consonants of stressed syllables with differing vowel sounds, such as *boat* and *night*, or the words *drunk* and *milk* in the final line of Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan.” e.g. A dove moved silently above the waves.

**Onomatopoeia:** the formation or use of words which imitate sounds, like whispering, clang and sizzle, but the term is generally expanded to refer to any word whose sound is suggestive of its meaning.

**Rhyme:** The repetition of the accented vowel sound and all succeeding sounds, as in old - cold, make - wake, feign - rain.

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## *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 mellow’d to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impair’d the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o’er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, so eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!  
-Lord Byron

---

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast fading violets cover’d up in leaves;  
And mid-May’s eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.  
-from *Ode to a Nightingale* by Keats

---

I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noonday dreams.  
I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
And their great pines groan aghast;  
Lured by the love of the genii that move  
In the depths of the purple sea;  
The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
And his burning plumes outspread,  
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,  
When the morning star shines dead;

-exerpts from *Ode to the West Wind* by Shelley

---

I heard a fly buzz when I died;  
The stillness round my form  
Was like the stillness in the air  
Between the heavens of storm.

The eyes beside had wrung them dry,  
And breaths were gathering sure  
For that last onset, when the king  
Be witnessed in his power.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away  
What portion of me I  
Could make assignable,-and then  
There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,  
Between the light and me;  
And then the windows failed, and then  
I could not see to see.

-Emily Dickinson

# Poetic Devices

**Allusion:** A casual, brief, symbolic reference to a well-known or familiar person, geographical place, event, literary work, author, work of art, or historical idea. The allusion may be obvious or subtle, generally, however, allusions tend to be indirect or passing. Allusions are commonly made to the Bible, nursery rhymes, myths, and Shakespeare. Allusions depend upon shared experiences between the reader and the writer since they are a type of shorthand. allusion = reference to something outside the main text.

*Example 1:* J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* offers many subtle allusions encouraging the reader to ask himself, "What does this remind me of?" Chapter 1 has a subtle allusion to prayer: As soon as Mr. Bilbo Baggins asks for help, he receives it.

*Example 2:* Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*

Chapter 1 refers to the beatitudes (Christ's teachings) – "Well," said the Lieutenant who had listened with amused interest to all this, and now waxing merry with his tippie; "Well, blessed are the peacemakers, especially the fighting..."

*Example 3:* *Catch 22* = When someone refers to a situation as a "Catch 22" they are referring to a no-win situation. Taken from Joseph Heller's book, *Catch 22*.

**Paradox:** true, profound statements that initially appear seemingly untrue or self-contradictory.

*Examples:* Fight for peace. Do not read this sentence. The beginning of the end. Make it idiot proof and someone will make a better idiot. Being "born again." The sounds of silence.

**Hyperbole:** A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect.

*Examples:* I could sleep for a year. This book weighs a ton. I'm starving, and it's only 10:30 am. I could eat a cow.

*Example:* From *Macbeth*:

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No. This my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

Here, Macbeth says that all the ocean water will not clean his hand of blood;

rather the blood from his hand will turn the green seas red. Shakespeare uses this hyperbole to stress the enormity of the guilt Macbeth feels for murdering Duncan.

**Oxymoron:** figure of speech placing contradictory ideas side by side for descriptive purposes.

Examples: Dodge Ram, genuine imitation, jumbo shrimp slightly pregnant (a woman is either pregnant or she is not)

*Example :*

Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!  
O heavy lightness, serious vanity;  
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!  
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!

Act 1, scene 1

William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Also, Juliet says, "My only love sprung from my only hate," referring to the fact that her beloved Romeo was born in the family which is the enemy of her family.

**Irony.** A mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (irony of situation), conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. Can be verbal (such as sarcasm) or situational. Irony can be witty, funny, or sad.

For example, in the film *Brazil* (dir. Terry Gilliam) we learn that the action takes place at 8:49 am sometime in the 20th century. The irony is that we know exactly when it happens (8:49), but apparently we only know in what century.

The firestation burning to the ground or a lifeguard drowning in the bathtub are simple examples of situational irony.

An example of dramatic irony (where the audience has knowledge that gives additional meaning to a character's words) would be when King Oedipus, who has unknowingly killed his father, says that he will banish his father's killer when he finds him.

Ironically, some of the greatest proponents of peace, Ghandi, Martin Luther King, and Jesus of Nazareth, all died violently.

Barbed Wire by Henry Taylor



One summer afternoon when nothing much was happening, they were standing around a tractor beside the barn while a horse in the field poked his head between two strands of the barbed-wire fence to get at the grass along the lane, when it happened--something they passed around the wood stove late at night for years, but never could explain--someone may have dropped a wrench into the toolbox or made a sudden move, or merely thought what might happen if the horse got scared, and then he did get scared, jumped sideways and ran down the fence line, leaving chunks of his throat skin and hair on every barb for ten feet before he pulled free and ran a short way into the field, stopped and planted his hoofs wide apart like a sawhorse, hung his head down as if to watch his blood running out, almost as if he were about to speak to them, who almost thought he could regret that he no longer had the strength to stand, then shuddered to his knees, fell on his side, and gave up breathing while the dripping wire hummed like a bowstring in the splintered air.

Flames  
By Billy Collins

Smokey the Bear heads  
into the autumn woods  
with a red can of gasoline  
and a box of matches.

His hat is cocked  
at a disturbing angle.

The moonlight catches the  
teeth of his smile.  
His paws, the size of catcher's mitts,  
crackle into the distance.

He is sick of dispensing  
warnings to the careless,  
the half-wit camper  
the dumbbell hiker.

He is going to show them  
how a professional does it.

**Happiness**

*Carl Sandburg*

I asked professors who teach the meaning of life to tell me what is happiness.  
And I went to famous executives who boss the work of thousands of men.  
They all shook their heads and gave me a smile as though I was trying to fool with them.  
And then one Sunday afternoon I wandered out along the Desplaines river  
And I saw a crowd of Hungarians under the trees with their women and children and a keg of beer and an accordion.

**Coward**  
A. R. Ammons

Bravery runs in my family.

This poem was written based on a news event. March 18, 1990, In Boston, two men disguised as police officers pulled off what remains the biggest art heist in history - handcuffing security guards inside the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and then taking an estimated \$300 million in art. Among them were three Rembrandts, a Vermeer, a Manet, and five by Degas.

### **Girl Writing a Letter**

by William Carpenter

A thief drives to the museum in his black van. The night watchman says Sorry, closed, you have to come back tomorrow. The thief sticks the point of his knife in the guard's ear. I haven't got all evening, he says, I need some art. Art is for pleasure, the guard says, not possession, you can't something, and then the duct tape is going across his mouth. Don't worry, the thief says, we're both on the same side. He finds the Dutch Masters and goes right for a Vermeer: "Girl Writing a Letter." The thief knows what he's doing. He has a Ph.D. He slices the canvas on one edge from the shelf holding the salad bowls right down to the square of sunlight on the black and white checked floor. The girl doesn't hear this, she's too absorbed in writing her letter, she doesn't notice him until too late. He's in the picture. He's already seated at the harpsichord. He's playing the G Minor Sonata by Domenico Scarlatti, which once made her heart beat till it passed the harpsichord and raced ahead and waited for the music to catch up. She's worked on this letter for three hundred and twenty years. Now a man's here, and though he's dressed in some weird clothes,

he's playing the harpsichord for her, for her alone, there's no one else alive in the museum. The man she was writing to is dead — time to stop thinking about him — the artist who painted her is dead. She should be dead herself, only she has an ear for music and a heart that's running up the staircase of the Gardner Museum with a man she's only known for a few minutes, but it's true, it feels like her whole life. So when the thief hands her the knife and says you slice the paintings out of their frames, you roll them up, she does it; when he says you put another strip of duct tape over the guard's mouth so he'll stop talking about aesthetics, she tapes him, and when the thief puts her behind the wheel and says, drive, baby, the night is ours, it is the Girl Writing a Letter who steers the black van on to the westbound ramp for Storrow Drive and then to the Mass Pike, it's the Girl Writing a Letter who drives eighty miles an hour headed west into a country that's not even discovered yet, with a known criminal, a van full of old masters and nowhere to go but down, but for the Girl Writing a Letter these things don't matter, she's got a beer in her free hand, she's on the road, she's real and she's in love.

# THE SONNET

A lyric poem of fourteen lines, following one or another of several set rhyme-schemes. The two characteristic sonnet types are the Italian (Petrarchan) and the English (Shakespearean). The first, the Italian form, is distinguished by its bipartite division into the octave and the sestet: the octave consisting of a first division of eight lines rhyming

abbaabba

and the sestet, or second division, consisting of six lines rhyming

cdecde, cdccdc, or cdedce.

On this twofold division of the Italian sonnet Charles Gayley notes: "The octave bears the burden; a doubt, a problem, a reflection, a query, an historical statement, a cry of indignation or desire, a vision of the ideal. The sestet eases the load, resolves the problem or doubt, answers the query, solaces the yearning, realizes the vision." Again it might be said that the octave presents the narrative, states the proposition or raises a question; the sestet drives home the narrative by making an abstract comment, applies the proposition, or solves the problem. Iambic pentameter is essentially the meter, but here again certain poets have experimented with hexameter and other meters.

The English (Shakespearean) sonnet, on the other hand, is so different from the Italian (though it grew from that form) as to permit of a separate classification. Instead of the octave and sestet divisions, this sonnet characteristically embodies four divisions: three quatrains (each with a rhyme-scheme of its own) and a rhymed couplet. Thus the typical rhyme-scheme for the English sonnet is

abab cdcd efef gg.

The couplet at the end is usually a commentary on the foregoing, an epigrammatic close. The Spenserian sonnet combines the Italian and the Shakespearean forms, using three quatrains and a couplet but employing linking rhymes between the quatrains, thus

abab bcba cdcd ee.

Certain qualities common to the sonnet as a form should be noted. Its definite restrictions make it a challenge to the artistry of the poet and call for all the technical skill at the poet's command. The more or less set rhyme patterns occurring regularly within the short space of fourteen lines afford a pleasant effect on the ear of the reader, and can create truly musical effects. The rigidity of the form precludes a too great economy or too great prodigality of words. Emphasis is placed on exactness and perfection of expression.

## An Echo From Willowwood

Christina Rossetti

*"O ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood."*

*D.G. Rossetti*

Two gazed into a pool, he gazed and she,  
Not hand in hand, yet heart in heart, I think,  
Pale and reluctant on the water's brink,  
As on the brink of parting which must be.  
Each eyed the other's aspect, she and he,  
Each felt one hungering heart leap up and sink,  
Each tasted bitterness which both must drink,  
There on the brink of life's dividing sea.  
Lilies upon the surface, deep below  
Two wistful faces craving each for each,  
Resolute and reluctant without speech: —  
A sudden ripple made the faces flow  
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach:  
So those hearts joined, and ah! were parted so.



## My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun (Sonnet 130)

by William Shakespeare

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;  
I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
As any she belied with false compare.

# Why Line Breaks Matter

When you are writing a poem, how do you know where to end the line of verse? How you want the poem to sound will often determine where you break your lines, for to some extent your line breaks are the poem's musical notation, determining pauses, tension, emphasis, and pace. Here are several common reasons for breaking a verse line at a particular place:

1. To stop a line of poetry at the end of a sentence or phrase unit, as in the following poem:

The moon is like an etching,  
Fine-lined against the sky.  
The gingko is like a crude sketch,  
Hardly worthy to be signed.  
-Eve Merriam, "Simile: Willow and Gingko"

2. To create a pace and/or sense of unbroken flow, breaking the line in the middle of a phrase unit, forcing the reader to either ignore the line end or pause slightly where, if it were prose, you normally would not pause, as in the following excerpt:

his hair was  
wild and uncombed  
and he was  
barefoot  
-Charles Bukowski, from "The Man with Beautiful Eyes"

3. To give special emphasis to a particular word or phrase by puffing it at the end of the line, which often calls for more attention to it. In the following excerpt, the poet is working against the natural pauses, enjambling her lines for increased tension:

Darker now. I put out  
the wet laundry. In the wind  
the pulley creaks and shifts.  
My dresses lift, tugging  
at the pins. I go in  
to where my daughter sleeps.  
-Kim Addonizio, from "Night Feeding"



4. To use line breaks as punctuation to clarify syntax and meaning, as in the following excerpt:

There were some dirty plates  
and a glass of milk  
beside her on a small table  
-William Carlos Williams, from "The Last Words of My English Grandmother"

5. To keep the poem "tight" and minimalist, the thought and emotion emerging with great compression and energy. Use short lines for this effect, as in the excerpt below:

Kiki Diaz spits  
just like I used to spit  
back when I was growing up  
thirty years ago  
in Memphis  
on Prescott Street.  
-Bobby Byrd, from "Good Field, No Hit"

6. To achieve a sweeping lyricism for large-spirited poems, keeping the lines longer, as in the following excerpt:

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,  
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of suns left.)  
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the  
dead, nor feed on the spectres in books,  
-Walt Whitman, from "Song of Myself"

7. To surprise the reader or create irony, as in the following excerpt:

Smokey the Bear heads  
into the autumn woods  
with a red can of gasoline  
and a box of matches.  
-Billy Collins, from "Flames"

8. To create a pattern, as in an anaphoric poem, where each line begins with the same word or phrase, as in the first excerpt; to create energy, where repetition of the first word gives momentum to the lines, compelling them forward as in the second excerpt.

In November I lost my foodstamps, the computer said I did not exist  
In November I lost my best friend who said I did not exist  
In November I lost my manuscripts and felt as if I did not exist  
In November I sent 2 postcards to my mother who wrote back saying she had not heard from me and DID I

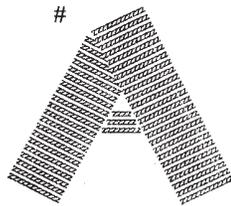
STILL EXIST?

-Harold Norse, from "In November"

Where the humming-bird shimmers, where the neck of the long-lived swan is curving and winding,  
Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where she laughs her near-human laugh,

-Walt Whitman, from "Song of Myself"

9. To create a visual design, as in concrete or shape poems.



-Norman Henry Pritchard II

10. To mask a rhyme. In the excerpt from "Night Feeding", the rhymes *pins/wind* and *creaks/sleeps* are muted by line breaks.

11. To experiment or play with how the words look on the page, as in the following excerpt:

Imagine Whitman remembering each blade of grass.  
Imagine Stalin phoning Mayakovski.  
Imagine Stalin phoning Frank.  
You can't imagine that?  
Frank phoning Stalin?  
Of course.  
-Andrei Codrescu, from "The Inner Source"

12. To enjoy the freedom to do whatever looks/feels/sounds right - there are no rules in poetry!

Adapted from Kowitz, Steve. *In the Palm of Your Hand*. Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, 1995. R.P. Dietz

**somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond**

E. E. Cummings

somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond  
any experience,your eyes have their silence:  
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,  
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me  
though i have closed myself as fingers,  
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens  
(touching skilfully,mysteriously)her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and  
my life will shut very beautifully ,suddenly,  
as when the heart of this flower imagines  
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals  
the power of your intense fragility:whose texture  
compels me with the color of its countries,  
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes  
and opens;only something in me understands  
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)  
nobody,not even the rain,has such small hands

**To a Poor Old Woman**  
William Carlos Williams

munching a plum on  
the street a paper bag  
of them in her hand

They taste good to her  
They taste good  
to her. They taste  
good to her.

You can see it by  
the way she gives herself  
to the one half  
sucked out in her hand

Comforted  
a solace of ripe plums  
seeming to fill the air  
They taste good to her

**This Is Just to Say**  
William Carlos Williams

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox

and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast

Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold

**From Here to There**  
By Jeff Hardin

My father wrestles with the chain, slams it  
tangled toward the truckbed where it catches  
tailgate, slither-clangs to a heap beneath  
his feet. Like a serpent of heavy links.  
like the unwieldy weight his bogus life  
has been, his trying to move it from here  
to there. He curses God, who made him fail.  
he turns, commands me pick up what I can.

I do: his stubborn will, his quiet code,  
the all day bouts of walking through the yard  
to find out what the moles have thieved. The stare.  
The muscle pulled. The knife slammed down to hush  
the dinner talk. I've heaved to get to here,  
mid-life, his life, to pack it up for good.

**kidnap poem**  
by Nikki Giovanni

ever been kidnapped  
by a poet  
if i were a poet  
i'd kidnap you  
put you in my phrases and meter  
you to jones beach  
or maybe coney island  
or maybe just to my house  
lyric you in lilacs  
dash you in the rain  
blend into the beach  
to complement my see  
play the lyre for you  
ode you with my love song  
anything to win you  
wrap you in the red Black green  
show you off to mama  
yeah if i were a poet i'd kid  
nap you

# Line Breaks

**Wolves**  
John Haines

Last night I heard wolves howling, their voices coming from afar  
over the wind-polished ice—so much brave solitude in that sound.  
They are death's snowbound sailors: they know only a continual  
drifting between moonlit islands, their tongues licking the stars.  
But they sing as good seamen should, and tomorrow the sun will find them yawning and blinking  
the snow from their eyelashes.  
Their voices rang through the frozen water of my human sleep,  
blown by the night wind  
with the moan for an icy sail.

**Small Song**  
A.R. Ammons

The reeds give  
way to the  
wind and give  
the wind away



Lying in a Hammock at William Duffey's Farm  
in the Pine Island, Minnesota

James Wright

Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly,  
Asleep on the black trunk,  
Blowing like a leaf in a green shadow.  
Down the ravine behind the empty house,  
The cowbells follow one another  
Into the distances of the afternoon.  
To my right,  
In a field of sunlight between two pines,  
The droppings of last year's horses  
Blaze up into golden stones.  
I lean back, as the evening darkens and comes on.  
A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home.  
I have wasted my life.

**My Parents Kept Me from Children Who Were Rough**

Stephen Spender

My parents kept me from children who were rough  
Who threw words like stones and who wore torn clothes  
Their thighs showed through rags. They ran through the street  
And climbed cliffs and stripped by the country streams.

I feared more than tigers their muscles like iron  
Their jerking hands and their knees tight on my arms.  
I feared the salt coarse pointing of those boys  
Who copied my lisp behind me on the road.

They were lithe, they sprang out behind hedges  
Like dogs to bark at my world. They threw mud  
While I looked the other way, pretending to smile.  
I longed to forgive them, but never smiled.

**Embrace**

Billy Collins

You know the parlor trick.  
Wrap your arms around your own torso  
and from the back it looks like  
someone is embracing you,  
her hands tearing at your shirt,  
her fingernails teasing your neck.

From the front it is another story.  
You never looked so utterly alone,  
with your crossed elbows and screwy grin.  
You could be waiting for a tailor  
to fit you for a straitjacket,  
one that would hold you really tight.

**It Was Like This: You Were Happy**

Jane Hirshfield

It was like this:  
you were happy, then you were sad,  
then happy again, then not.

It went on.  
You were innocent or you were guilty.  
Actions were taken, or not.

At times you spoke, at other times you were silent.  
Mostly, it seems you were silent -- what could you say?

Now it is almost over.

**The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner**

Randall Jarrell

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,  
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.  
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,  
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.  
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

Like a lover, your life bends down and kisses your life.

It does this not in forgiveness --  
between you, there is nothing to forgive --  
but with the simple nod of a baker at the moment  
he sees the bread is finished with transformation.

Eating, too, is now a thing only for others.

It doesn't matter what they will make of you  
or your days: they will be wrong,  
they will miss the wrong woman, miss the wrong man,  
all the stories they tell will be tales of their own invention.

Your story was this: you were happy, then you were sad,  
you slept, you awakened.  
Sometimes you ate roasted chestnuts, sometimes persimmons.

**Pragmatist**

Edmund Conti

Apocalypse soon  
Coming our way  
Ground zero at noon  
Halve a nice day.  
-1985

**you fit into me**  
Margaret Atwood

you fit into me  
like a hook into an eye

a fish hook  
an open eye -1971



-1945

**The limerick's never averse**

by Laurence Perrine

The limerick's never averse  
To expressing itself in a terse  
Economical style,  
And yet, all the while,  
The limerick's *always* a verse.

## Manners

Elizabeth Bishop

For a Child of 1918

My grandfather said to me  
as we sat on the wagon seat,  
"Be sure to remember to always  
speak to everyone you meet."

We met a stranger on foot.  
My grandfather's whip tapped his hat.  
"Good day, sir. Good day. A fine day."  
And I said it and bowed where I sat.

Then we overtook a boy we knew  
with his big pet crow on his shoulder.  
"Always offer everyone a ride;  
don't forget that when you get older,"

my grandfather said. So Willy  
climbed up with us, but the crow  
gave a "Caw!" and flew off. I was wor-  
ried.  
How would he know where to go?

But he flew a little way at a time  
from fence post to fence post, ahead;  
and when Willy whistled he answered.  
"A fine bird," my grandfather said,

"and he's well brought up. See, he  
answers  
nicely when he's spoken to.  
Man or beast, that's good manners.  
Be sure that you both always do."

When automobiles went by,  
the dust hid the people's faces,  
but we shouted "Good day! Good day!  
Fine day!" at the top of our voices.

When we came to Hustler Hill,  
he said that the mare was tired,  
so we all got down and walked,  
as our good manners required.

## The Day the Saucers Came

by Neil Gaiman

That Day, the saucers landed. Hundreds of them, golden,  
Silent, coming down from the sky like great snowflakes,  
And the people of Earth stood and  
stared as they descended,  
Waiting, dry-mouthed, to find out what waited inside for us  
And none of us knowing if we would be here tomorrow  
But you didn't notice it because

That day, the day the saucers came, by some coincidence,  
Was the day that the graves gave up their dead  
And the zombies pushed up through soft earth  
or erupted, shambling and dull-eyed, unstoppable,  
Came towards us, the living, and we screamed and ran,  
But you did not notice this because

On the saucer day, which was zombie day, it was  
Ragnarok also, and the television screens showed us  
A ship built of dead-men's nails, a serpent, a wolf,  
All bigger than the mind could hold,  
and the cameraman could  
Not get far enough away, and then the Gods came out  
But you did not see them coming because

On the saucer-zombie-battling-gods  
day the floodgates broke  
And each of us was engulfed by genies and sprites  
Offering us wishes and wonders and eternities  
And charm and cleverness and true  
brave hearts and pots of gold  
While giants feefofummed across  
the land and killer bees,  
But you had no idea of any of this because

That day, the saucer day, the zombie day  
The Ragnarok and fairies day,  
the day the great winds came  
And snows and the cities turned to crystal, the day  
All plants died, plastics dissolved, the day the  
Computers turned, the screens telling  
us we would obey, the day  
Angels, drunk and muddled, stumbled from the bars,  
And all the bells of London were sounded, the day  
Animals spoke to us in Assyrian, the Yeti day,  
The fluttering capes and arrival of  
the Time Machine day,  
You didn't notice any of this because  
you were sitting in your room, not doing anything  
not even reading, not really, just  
looking at your telephone,  
wondering if I was going to call.

---

## The Hand That Signed the Paper

By Dylan Thomas

The hand that signed the paper felled a city;  
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,  
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;  
These five kings did a king to death.

The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,  
The finger joints are cramped with chalk;  
A goose's quill has put an end to murder  
That put an end to talk.

The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,  
And famine grew, and locusts came;  
Great is the hand that holds dominion over  
Man by a scribbled name.

The five kings count the dead but do not  
soften  
The crusted wound nor stroke the brow;  
A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven;  
Hands have no tears to flow.

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## Ode to American English

Barbara Hamby - 2004

I was missing English one day, American, really,  
with its pill-popping Hungarian goulash of everything  
from Anglo-Saxon to Zulu, because British English  
is not the same, if the paperback dictionary  
I bought at Brentano's on the Avenue de l'Opera  
is any indication, too cultured by half. Oh, the English  
know their dahlias, but what about doowop, donuts,  
Dick Tracy, Tricky Dick? With their elegant Oxfordian  
accents, how could they understand my yearning for the hotrod,  
hotdog, hot flash vocabulary of the U. S. of A.,  
the fragmented fandango of Dagwood's everyday flattening  
of Mr. Beasley on the sidewalk, fetuses floating  
on billboards, drive-by monster hip-hop stereos shaking  
the windows of my dining room like a 7.5 earthquake,  
Ebonics, Spanglish, "you know" used as comma and period,  
the inability of 90% of the population to get the present perfect:  
I have went, I have saw, I have tooken Jesus into my heart,  
the battle cry of the Bible Belt, but no one uses  
the King James anymore, only plain-speak versions,  
in which Jesus, raising Lazarus from the dead, says,  
"Dude, wake up," and the L-man bolts up like a B-movie  
mummy, "Whoa, I was toasted." Yes, ma'am,  
I miss the mongrel plentitude of American English, its fall-guy,  
rat-terrier, dog-pound neologisms, the bomb of it all,  
the rushing River Jordan backwoods mutability of it, the low-rider,  
boom-box cruise of it, from New Joisey to Ha-wah-ya  
with its sly dog, malasada-scarfing beach blanket lingo  
to the ubiquitous Valley Girl's like-like stuttering,  
shopaholic rant. I miss its quotidian beauty, its querulous  
back-biting righteous indignation, its preening rotgut  
flag-waving cowardice. Suffering Succotash, sputters  
Sylvester the Cat; sine die, say the pork-bellied legislators  
of the swamps and plains. I miss all those guys, their Tweety-bird  
resilience, their Doris Day optimism, the candid unguent  
of utter unhappiness on every channel, the midnight televangelist  
euphoric stew, the junk mail, voice mail vernacular.  
On every boulevard and rue I miss the Tarzan cry of Johnny  
Weismueller, Johnny Cash, Johnny B. Goode,  
and all the smart-talking, gum-snapping hard-girl dialogue,  
finger-popping x-rated street talk, sports babble,  
Cheetoes, Cheerios, chili dog diatribes. Yeah, I miss them all,  
sitting here on my sidewalk throne sipping champagne  
verses lined up like hearses, metaphors juking, nouns zipping  
in my head like Corvettes on Dexadrine, French verbs  
slitting my throat, yearning for James Dean to jump my curb.

## Love Song: I and Thou

Alan Dugan

Nothing is plumb, level, or square:  
the studs are bowed, the joists  
are shaky by nature, no piece fits  
any other piece without a gap  
or pinch, and bent nails  
dance all over the surfacing  
like maggots. By Christ  
I am no carpenter. I built  
the roof for myself, the walls  
for myself, the floors  
for myself, and got  
hung up in it myself. I  
danced with a purple thumb  
at this house-warming, drunk  
with my prime whiskey: rage.  
Oh I spat rage's nails  
into the frame-up of my work:  
it held. It settled plumb,  
level, solid, square and true  
for that great moment. Then  
it screamed and went on through,  
skewing as wrong the other way.  
God damned it. This is hell,  
but I planned it. I sawed it,  
I nailed it, and I  
will live in it until it kills me.  
I can nail my left palm  
to the left-hand crosspiece but  
I can't do everything myself.  
I need a hand to nail the right,  
a help, a love, a you, a wife.

## The Moon

Robert Bly

After writing poems all day,  
I go off to see the moon in the pines.  
Far in the woods I sit down against a pine.  
The moon has her porches turned to face the light,  
But the deep part of her house is in the darkness.

## Hazel Tells LaVerne

Katherine Howard Machan

last night  
im cleanin out my  
howard johnsons ladies room  
when all of a sudden  
up pops this frog  
musta come from the sewer  
swimmin aroun an tryin ta  
climb up the sida the bowl  
so i goes ta flushm down  
but sohhelpmegod he starts talkin  
bout a golden ball  
an how i can be a princess  
me a princess  
well my mouth drops  
all the way to the floor  
an he says  
kiss me just kiss me  
once on the nose  
well i screams  
ya little green pervert  
am i hitsm with my mop  
an has ta flush  
the toilet down three times  
me  
a princess

-1976



### Hymn #101 by Joe Pug

Yea I've come to know the wish list of my father  
I've come to know the shipwrecks where he wished  
I've come to wish aloud among the over dressed crowd  
Come to witness now the sinking of the ship  
Throwing pennies from the sea top next to it  
And I've come to roam the forest past the village  
With a dozen lazy horses in my cart  
I've come here to get high,  
To do more than just get by.  
I've come to test the timber of my heart  
Oh, I've come to test the timber of my heart  
And I've come to be untroubled in my seeking  
And I've come to see that nothing is for naught  
I've come to reach out blind  
to reach forward and behind  
For the more I seek the more I'm sought  
Yea, the more I seek the more I'm sought.

And I've come to meet the sheriff and his posse  
To offer him the broadside of my jaw  
I've come here to get broke  
Then maybe bum a smoke  
We'll go drinking two towns over after all  
Oh, we'll go drinking two towns over after all.

And I've come to meet the legendary takers  
I've only come to ask them for a lot  
Oh they say I come with less  
than I should rightfully possess  
I say the more I buy the more I'm bought  
And the more I'm bought the less I cost

### I Envy the Wind

Lucinda Williams

I envy the wind  
That whispers in your ear  
That howls through the winter  
That freezes your fingers  
That moves through your hair  
And cracks your lips  
And chills you to the bone  
I envy the wind

I envy the rain

That falls on your face  
That wets your eyelashes  
And dampens your skin  
And touches your tongue  
And soaks through your shirt  
And drips down your back  
I envy the rain

I envy the sun

That brightens your summer  
That warms your body  
And holds you in her heat  
And makes your days longer  
And makes you hot  
And makes you sweat  
I envy the sun  
I envy the wind, I envy the rain,  
I envy the sun, I envy the wind

And I've come to take their servants and their surplus  
And I've come to take their raincoats and their speed  
I've come to get my fill  
To ransack and spill  
I've come to take the harvest for the seed  
I've come to take the harvest for the seed

And I've come to know the manger that you sleep in  
I've come to be the stranger that you keep  
I've come from down the road  
And my footsteps never slowed  
Before we met, I knew we'd meet  
Before we met, I knew we'd meet

And I've come here to ignore your cries and heartaches  
I've come to closely listen to you sing  
I've come here to insist  
That I leave here with a kiss  
I've come to say exactly what I mean  
and I mean so many things.

And you've come to know me stubborn as a butcher  
and you've come to know me thankless as a guest  
will you recognize my face when gods awful grace  
strips me of my jacket and my vest  
and reveals all the treasure in my chest



### Glucose Self-Monitoring

Katy Giebenhain

A stabbing in miniature, it is,  
a tiny crime,  
my own blood parceled  
drop by drop and set  
on the flickering tongue  
of this machine.  
It is the spout-punching of trees  
for syrup new and smooth  
and sweeter  
than nature ever intended.  
It is Sleeping Beauty's curse  
and fascination.  
It is the dipstick measuring of oil  
from the Buick's throat,  
the necessary maintenance.  
It is every vampire movie ever made.  
Hand, my martyr without lips,  
my quiet cow.  
I'll milk your fingertips  
for all they're worth.  
For what they're worth.  
Something like a harvest, it is,  
a tiny crime.

### Wax Lips

Cynthia Rylant

Todd's Hardware was dust and a monkey—  
a real one, on the second floor—  
and Mrs. Todd there behind the glass cases.  
We stepped over buckets of nails and lawnmowers  
to get to the candy counter in the back,  
and pointed at the red wax lips,  
and Mary Janes,  
and straws full of purple sugar.  
Said goodbye to Mrs. Todd, she white-faced and silent,  
and walked the streets of Beaver,  
our teeth sunk hard in the wax,  
and big red lips worth kissing.

### The Boy in the Bubble

Paul Simon

It was a slow day  
And the sun was beating  
On the soldiers by the side of the road  
There was a bright light  
A shattering of shop windows  
The bomb in the baby carriage  
Was wired to the radio

These are the days of miracle and wonder  
This is the long distance call  
The way the camera follows us in slo-mo  
The way we look to us all

The way we look to a distant constellation  
That's dying in a corner of the sky  
These are the days of miracle and wonder  
And don't cry baby, don't cry  
Don't cry

It was a dry wind  
And it swept across the desert  
And it curled into the circle of birth  
And the dead sand  
Falling on the children  
The mothers and the fathers  
And the automatic earth  
These are the days of miracle and wonder  
This is the long distance call  
The way the camera follows us in slo-mo  
The way we look to us all  
The way we look to a distant constellation  
That's dying in a corner of the sky  
These are the days of miracle and wonder  
And don't cry baby, don't cry  
Don't cry

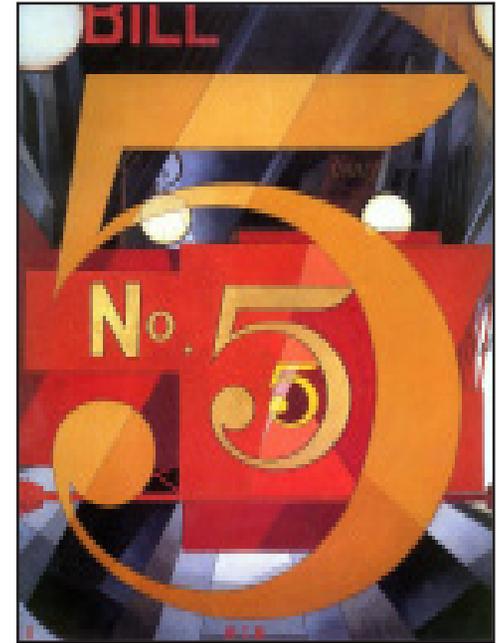
It's a turn-around jump shot  
It's everybody jump start  
It's every generation throws a hero up the pop charts  
Medicine is magical and magical is art  
The Boy in the Bubble  
And the baby with the baboon heart

And I believe  
These are the days of lasers in the jungle  
Lasers in the jungle somewhere  
Staccato signals of constant information  
A loose affiliation of millionaires  
And billionaires and baby  
These are the days of miracle and wonder  
This is the long distance call  
The way the camera follows us in slo-mo  
The way we look to us all  
The way we look to a distant constellation  
That's dying in a corner of the sky  
These are the days of miracle and wonder  
And don't cry baby, don't cry

### The Great Figure

William Carlos Williams

Among the rain  
and lights  
I saw the figure 5  
in gold  
on a red  
fire truck  
moving  
tense  
unheeded  
to gong clangs  
siren howls  
and wheels rumbling  
through the dark city



“THE FIGURE 5 IN GOLD”  
CHARLES DEMUTH

### On a Cape May Warbler Who Flew Against My Window

Eamon Grennan

She's stopped in her southern tracks  
Brought haply to this hard knock  
When she shoots from the tall spruce  
And snaps her neck on the glass.

From the fall grass I gather her  
And give her to my silent children  
Who give her a decent burial  
Under the dogwood in the garden.

They lay their gifts in the grave:  
Matches, a clothes-peg, a coin;  
Fire paper for her, sprinkle her  
With water, fold earth over her.

She is out of her element forever  
Who was air's high-spirited daughter;  
What guardian wings can I conjure  
Over my own young, their migrations?

The children retreat indoors.  
Shadows flicker in the tall spruce.  
Small birds flicker like shadows —  
Ghosts come nest in my branches.

# Poem of Choice Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title of Piece: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Theme: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>5</b>          “A+”          96-100</p>	<p>A “5” meets all of the requirements of a “4,” but it also appeals to the reader because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses advanced poetic techniques such as rhythm, symbolism, parallelism, connotative language</li> <li>• it evokes emotion (humor, anger, pain, joy, fear)</li> <li>• operates on a number of different levels</li> <li>• sophisticated vocabulary, structure, or ideas are present</li> <li>• poet “plays” with language in an interesting way</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b>          “A”          95</p>	<p>the entire piece builds up to and supports the intended theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The piece effectively integrates a variety of <b>sound devices</b>, which may include...             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Alliteration</li> <li>— Assonance</li> <li>— Consonance</li> <li>— Onomatopoeia</li> <li>— Rhyme</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The piece effectively integrates a variety of other <b>poetic devices</b>, such as...             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Enjambment (attention to line breaks)</li> <li>— Metaphor</li> <li>— Simile</li> <li>— Imagery</li> <li>— Personification</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>title is meaningful and thought-provoking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• piece reveals evidence of serious revision, polishing and editing</li> <li>• drafts show support group comments, author provides evidence of 2 macro edits and 2 micro edits</li> <li>• poem is clear and makes sense</li> <li>• self-evaluation rubric is thorough</li> <li>• well-written author’s note is attached</li> <li>• writing has been proofread and corrected for mechanics, punctuation is consistent</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b>          “B”          85</p>	<p>Contains most of the characteristics of a “4,” but...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the piece reveals but does not adequately support a theme</li> <li>• piece integrates some sound devices</li> <li>• piece integrates some poetic devices</li> <li>• contains some mechanical errors</li> <li>• poem may have moments of unclarity or vagueness</li> <li>• final product may not include all components of the writing process (see criteria for a “4”)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b>          “C”          75</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a theme is not apparent</li> <li>• the piece fails to integrate sound and poetic devices</li> <li>• poem may include distracting lack of clarity</li> <li>• poem may lack specific, concrete details</li> <li>• organizational problems detract from the meaning or flow</li> <li>• structure may be too simplistic</li> <li>• word choice may be awkward, simplistic, or cliché</li> <li>• final product may be missing several components of the writing process</li> </ul>
<p><b>1</b>          “Yikes”          0-65</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serious mechanical errors detract from understanding</li> <li>• meaning is unclear</li> <li>• poem is vague; no concrete descriptors of abstract ideas</li> <li>• piece exhibits little or no attempt to incorporate writing techniques</li> <li>• piece fails to meet length requirements</li> <li>• topic may be inappropriate for audience</li> <li>• final product reveals little or no evidence of the writing process</li> </ul>

