Poetry
What is it?
What is it not?
(Prose)
1st Rule of Poetry:

Rules can be broken, within reason.
Just as James Bond has a license to kill, poets have Poetic License.
Elements: Speaker

- The speaker is the voice or persona of the poem.
- It is not necessarily always the poet.
- Sometimes the poet creates a speaker that is non-human or even an inanimate object.
Elements: **Tone**

Tone is the attitude, expressed through the language, that the speaker has toward his/her/its subject.
2nd Rule of Poetry

Poetry is read aloud much like prose:

– Major pauses occur at punctuation and between clauses
– Simply because a line ends, doesn’t mean there is a pause
Basic Poem Types

• **Narrative** - Tells a story* (in past tense)
  - Ballad: involves folk hero
  - Epic: involves larger-than life heroes

• **Dramatic** - A story*-in-progress
  - Monologue: letter, or prayer
  - Dialogue: conversation

• **Lyric** - deals with a subject (love, nature, death) but does not have plot

*Remember the basic elements of a story!!!
3rd Rule of Poetry

Poetry must follow the rules of syntax (word ordering system; see grammar section of notes):

Sentences, like cars, are constructed of parts, each part having a function.

If you threw together a car with randomly selected parts into randomly selected positions, would it run?
Why is syntax so important?

Car blue the squashed falling was piano a by.
Parts of Speech in English

- **Noun**: person, place, thing, idea:
  - John, Nevada, universe, book, love

- **Verb**: action or state of being:
  - climb, swim, jump, is, flying, writing
  - Infinitive verbs: to climb, to swim
  - a gerund is a verb acting as a noun:
    - *I like climbing. Swimming is fun.*

- **Auxiliary Verbs**: helping verbs:
  - is-, was-, am-, have/has been-, will-
Parts of Speech in English

- **Adjective** = describes noun:
  - red, large, shallow, round

- **Adverb** = describes verb or adjective:
  - slowly, quickly, then

- **Pronoun** = substitute noun:
  - he, she, them, it, who, whom, which, that
Parts of Speech in English

• Preposition= denotes location, time, relationship: --on, above, before for, of, to

• Conjunction= connects words, phrases, clauses: --if, and, but, than

• Interjection= conveys emotion:
  --Wow!  Hooray!

• Articles= introduce nouns: --the, a
Syntax - Sentence Components

All sentences must have a **subject** and a **predicate**:

The **cacophony of clattering cups in the kitchen** was caused by Karen.

Sometimes the subject is implied:

(you) Get out of here!
Syntax - Sentence Components

Clauses: Segments of sentences that contain both a subject and a predicate.

Independent Clauses and Dependent Clauses:

- After she eats, she does the dishes.
- She didn’t see the person who broke her doll.
- Chewing with her mouth open is the reason why Fred cannot stand sitting across from his sister Melanie.
- She cried a little because she wanted a new one.

Independent Clauses are joined by coordinating conjunctions like because, although, since, even though, and standard conjunctions and, but, for, or.
Syntax- Sentence Components

Phrases:
Segments of sentences that are missing either a subject or a predicate, or both.

Noun Phrase: My coach is happy.
Verb Phrase: The team is in the middle of playing a game.
Adjective Phrase: It was a very close and exciting game.
Adverbial Phrase: I scored the goal very quickly.
Prepositional Phrase: Dad was happy about the goal.
Phrases and Clauses

The bear attacked as he was walking through the woods.
(Dependent clause following independent clause)

The well kept house nevertheless fails to sell in the current economy.
(noun phrase; verb phrase; prepositional phrase)
Parts of Speech & Sentence Components

A delicately arranged bouquet of flowers welcomed visitors to the front desk, but the clerk, who was allergic, detested it.
4th Rule of Poetry

Poems effectively use words to convey meaning—

—What’s a poem without words?—
Rhetoric

The use of language (words) to convey meaning, ideas, prove a point, make a case, etc.
Rhetorical Figures

Simile - a direct comparison, using linking words such as like, as, than

– *Right as rain; older than sin*

Personification - giving human characteristics to the non-human.

– *Fear came knocking at the door*
Rhetorical Figures

**Metaphor**—a comparison between two vastly different things, that have a commonality that is the focus of the comparison

– *Her courage was a rock during that difficult time*
Rhetorical Figures—metaphors

- **Extended metaphor**—carried through many lines
  
  "All the world’s a stage,
  And all the men and women merely players;
  They have their exits and their entrances,
  And one man in his time plays many parts,
  His acts being seven ages."  (Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*)

- **Implied metaphor**—comparison is subtle
  
  "Moriarty slithered away from the crime scene"

- **Synesthethic cross-sensory metaphor**
  
  "Loud colors; sweet-smelling; light music"

- **Synecdoche**—one part standing for the whole
  
  "I like your wheels, man! [wheels = car] or All hands on deck! [hands = sailors]"

- **Metonymy**—the whole standing for a part
  
  "the White House has no comment on that"
Rhetoric: Imagery

- Imagery is the use of sensory information in the poem.
- Imagery puts the reader in the poem. It helps the reader to “experience” the poem.
Imagery

Sensory details draw upon the senses:
• Sight: visual imagery
• Sound: auditory imagery
• Taste: gustatory imagery
• Smell: olfactory imagery
• Touch: tactile imagery
Imagery

Don’t forget the other senses!!!

- **Organic** imagery: Internal, which includes pain, thirst, fatigue

- **Kinesthetic** imagery: Vestibular and proprioceptive senses, including balance, acceleration, and equilibrium
Rhetoric: Diction

- **DENOTATION** - the dictionary definition of a word
- **CONNOTATION** - the implied meaning, the feeling or impression associated with a word
Eloise’s new outfit clearly exposes her skinny frame.

Eloise’s new outfit clearly exhibits her slender frame.
5th Rule of Poetry

Poems effectively use sound to convey meaning-

Poetry is not a silent art form!!!
Sound has nothing to do with spelling!

English Alphabet (26 letters):

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

English Phonemes (44 total):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Phoneme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sit</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>Book</td>
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<td>Very</td>
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<td>Six</td>
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<td>W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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Sound Devices

• **Alliteration** - repetitive initial phonemes in words of a line of poetry

• **Consonance** - repetition of consonant phonemes anywhere in a line of poetry

• **Assonance** - repetitive vowel phonemes
Sound Devices

Onomatopoeia – use of words that make the sound they are representing.

Pop, crash, bang, slap
Onomatopoeia by Eve Merriam

The rusty spigot

sputter, splatters,

utters scatters,
a sputter, spurts,

spatters a finally stops sputtering

smattering of drops, and plash!
gashes wider; gushes rushes splashes

slash, clear water dashes.
Poems also create music through the repetition of words and lines.

- **Refrain** - the repetition of a line
- **Chorus** - the repetition of several lines of poetry
Rhyme

**Exact** rhyme are words that have the exact same-sounding ending, like *cat* and *hat*

**Slant** rhyme words sound similar, but aren’t exact, like *one* and *down* or *seen* and *neat*
Sound- Rhyme

- **Internal Rhyme** - rhyming words within a line
- **End rhyme** - rhyming words at ends of lines
- **Couplet** - 2 consecutive lines with the same end rhyme
The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.
Rhythm: the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line, marked by feet.

Meter: the number of feet in a line.

(the measurement of poetry)
## Metrical Feet in Poetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metrical Foot</th>
<th>Number of Feet</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iamb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Second syllable is stressed</td>
<td>goodbye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trochee</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>First syllable is stressed</td>
<td>awful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anapest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Third syllable is stressed</td>
<td>Halloween</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dactyl</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>First syllable is stressed</td>
<td>wonderful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spondee</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Two consecutive stressed syllables</td>
<td>big deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pyrrhic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Two consecutive unstressed syllables</td>
<td>(no such word in English)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feet per line in poetry scansion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Feet per Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monometer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimeter</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimeter *</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetrameter *</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentameter *</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexameter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heptameter</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octameter</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Common to poetry written in English.
Scansion: describing the rhythms of poetry by marking (see examples) the locations of
- stressed (/) and
- unstressed (u) syllables,
- dividing the lines into feet (I) and
- counting the feet.

The entire process is called **scanning** a poem.
A pause within a line of poetry; contributes to the rhythm of the line. Marked in scansion by II
From *Julius Caesar*

It must be by his death and for my part

I know no personal cause to spurn at him

But for the general. He would be crowned.
It must be by his death and for my part I know no personal cause to spurn at him. But for the general. He would be crowned.
6th Rule of Poetry

Poems have some semblance of form...

Poems follow rhyme, rhythm, or line grouping patterns

But remember Rule #1:
Fixed Form versus Free Verse
Structure

Patterns in poetry that give a poem its form.
Structure

Stanza – grouping of lines in poetry

- A stanza in poetry is like a paragraph in prose.
Structure in Poetry

- **Couplet** - 2 consecutive lines with the same end rhyme
- **Tercet** - 3 line pattern
- **Quatrain** - 4 line pattern
- **Quintet** - 5 line pattern
- **Sestet** - 6 line pattern
- **Septet** - 7 line pattern
- **Octave** - 8 line pattern
Fixed Forms

- Poems are categorized by the pattern of its lines, meter, rhythm, or stanzas.
- Fixed form poems may not always fit into categories precisely, because poets sometimes vary traditional forms to create innovative effects.
Fixed Forms

• Sonnet – “Little Song”

Sonnets propose a situation, attitude, or problem that is resolved at the volta

– Italian (Petrarchan)
  • abbaabba then cdecde or cdcccd or cdcccdc

– English– always end with a couplet
  • Elizabethan- abab cdcde fefg
  • Spenserian- abab bccbc cdcde ee
Fixed Forms

- **Sestina** - 6 sestets + 1 tercet; six keywords repeated at ends of lines and twice in each line of tercet
- **Villanelle** - 5 tercets + 1 quatrain; line 1 refrained at lines 6, 12, 18; line 3 refrained at lines 9, 15, 19
- **Limerick** - light subjects; aabba; lines 1,2,5= 3 feet; 3,4= 2 feet
  1 iamb + 2 anapests ; 1 iamb, 1 anapest
Limerick

There was an old person of Cromer
Who stood on one leg to read Homer.
  When he found he grew stiff
He jumped over the cliff,
Which concluded that person of Cromer.
7th Rule of Poetry

Poetry must have some message that is universally applicable (THEME)

Otherwise, why would it appeal to others besides the poet?
Poetry Explication

Basic Requirements for discussion:

• THEME
• Situation, Speaker & Tone
• Structure & Form
• Sound: rhythm & devices
• Rhetoric: diction & devices

A piece of writing that explains in detail the intricacies of a poem
Silver

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy coat the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

—Walter de la Mare
In the poem “Silver,” Walter de la Mare uses repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and assonance to create a particular mood. By repeating the word “silver”, the poet emphasizes the subject of the poem: the moon’s silvery light. Similarly, the alliteration “silver shoon” (2) creates a “shh” sound that imitates the silence described in the poem in which even the dove’s “peep” (9) can be heard. Finally, the assonance in rhymes like “moon” and “shoon” seems to echo the figure of the moon itself, as your mouth must make the shape of an “O” in order to create those sounds.
The fog comes on little cat feet.

It sits looking over harbor and city on silent haunches and then moves on.

— Carl Sandburg
Metaphor:
The fog is compared to a cat.

In the poem “Fog,” Carl Sandburg uses a metaphor to describe the mysterious movement of fog. By comparing the fog to a cat, Sandburg suggests that fog moves quietly and stealthily, as he creates the visual image of fog “on silent haunches” (5) looking out over the harbor.
Autumn Chant- Edna St. Vincent Millay

Now the autumn shudders
In the rose's root.
Far and wide the ladders
Lean among the fruit.

Now the autumn clambers
Up the trellised frame,
And the rose remembers
The dust from which it came.

Brighter than the blossom
On the rose's bough
Sits the wizened orange,
Bitter berry now;

Beauty never slumbers;
All is in her name;
But the rose remembers
The dust from which it came
**STRUCTURE & RHYTHM**

Stanzas: 4  
Lines/: 4  

Scheme: ABAB (ABCB lines 9-12)  
Rhythm: trochaic trimeter  

Millay’s poem consists of four four-line stanzas. For the most part, the rhyme scheme consists of alternating end rhyme; that is, ABAB. A deviation occurs in the third stanza, which is known as a ballad stanza due to its rhyme scheme of ABCB. The rhythm is trochaic trimeter, except that in the second and fourth lines of each stanza the final unstressed syllable is dropped. This variance adds additional rhythm from line to line.