

ypes of Poem

Examples

aiku

While you Decline to Cry
By Ōno Yasumaro
(Loose translation by Michael R. Burch)

“While you decline to cry,
high on the mountainside
a single stalk of plume grass wilts.”

This poem contains three lines, which is the typical structure of a haiku poem. It does not follow any formal rhyme scheme or proper rhythmical pattern.

Free Verse

After the Sea-Ship

By Walt Whitman

“After the Sea-Ship—after the whistling winds;
After the white-gray sails, taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves, hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship:
Waves of the ocean, bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying...”

This poem neither has rhyming lines, nor does it adhere to a particular metrical plan. Hence, it is free of artificial expression. It has rhythm and a variety of rhetorical devices used for sounds, such as assonance and consonance.



The Song of Hiawatha
By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“By the shore of Gitchie Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the doorway of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited...”

These are a few lines from The Song of Hiawatha, a classic epic poem that presents an American Indian legend of a loving, brave, patriotic, and stoic hero, but which bears resemblance to Greek myths of Homer. Longfellow tells of the sorrows and triumphs of the Indian tribes in detail in this lengthy poem. Therefore, this is a fine example of a modern epic, though other epics include Paradise Lost by John Milton and Iliad by Homer.

allad

La Belle Dame sans Merci

By John Keats

“O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing ...

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.”

This poem presents a perfect example of a ballad—a folk-style poem that typically narrates a love story. The language of this poem is simple. It contains twelve stanzas, with four quatrains and a rhyme scheme of abcb.

onnet

Visions

By Francesco Petrarch

“Being one day at my window all alone,
So manie strange things happened me to see,
As much as it grieveth me to thinke thereon.
At my right hand a hynde appear’d to mee,
So faire as mote the greatest god delite;
Two eager dogs did her pursue in chace.
Of which the one was blacke, the other white:
With deadly force so in their cruell race
They pincht the haunches of that gentle beast,
That at the last, and in short time, I spide,
Under a rocke, where she alas, opprest,
Fell to the ground, and there untimely dide.
Cruell death vanquishing so noble beautie
Oft makes me wayle so hard a desire.”

The rhyme scheme of a Petrarchan sonnet features the first eight lines, called an octet, which rhymes as abba–abba–cdc–dcd. The remaining six lines are called a sestet, and might have a range of rhyme schemes.



In Memory of W. B. Yeats
By W. H. Auden

“With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;
In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.”



Epitaph

William Shakespeare's Epitaph

“Good friend for Jesus’ sake forebeare,
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones.”

Shakespeare had given a prediction that somebody might dig up his grave and, due to this fear, he composed his epitaph in verse form before his death. This poem is chiseled on his gravestone.

imerick

To Miss Vera Beringer
By Lewis Carroll

“There was a young lady of station
‘I love man’ was her sole exclamation;
But when men cried: ‘You flatter,’
She replied, ‘Oh! no matter
Isle of Man is the true explanation.”

This limerick contains five lines with a rhyme scheme of aabba. Here we can notice the first, second, and fifth lines rhyme together, with three feet; whereas the third and fourth lines contain two feet and rhyme together.



Millanelle

Mad Girl's Love Song By Sylvia Plath

"I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead; (A1)
I lift my lids and all is born again. (a)
(I think I made you up inside my head.) (A2)

The stars go waltzing out in blue and red, (a)
And arbitrary blackness gallops in: (b)
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead. (A1)

I dreamed that you bewitched me into bed (a)
And sung me moon-struck, kissed me quite insane. (b)
(I think I made you up inside my head.) (A2)

God topples from the sky, hell's fires fade: (a)
Exit seraphim and Satan's men: (b)
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead. (A1)

I fancied you'd return the way you said, (a)
But I grow old and I forget your name. (b)
(I think I made you up inside my head.) (A2)

I should have loved a thunderbird instead; (a)
At least when spring comes they roar back again. (b)
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead. (A1)
(I think I made you up inside my head.)" (A2)

The refraining pattern of a typical villanelle is arranged as shown below:

(A1) refrain 1

Line 2 (b)

(A2) refrain 2

Line 4 (a)

Line 5 (b)

(A1) refrain 1

Line 7 (a)

Line 8 (b)

(A2) refrain 2

Line 10 (a)

Line 11 (b)

(A1) refrain 1

Line 13 (a)

Line 14 (b)

(A2) refrain 2

Line 16 (a)

Line 17 (b)

(A1) refrain 1

(A2) refrain 2

Here, the letters “a” and “b” denote two rhyming sounds, while “A” indicates refrain, and the numerals “1” and “2” denote refrain 1 and refrain 2 respectively.