INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF POETRY

Poetry is the most misunderstood form of writing. It is also arguably the purest form of writing. Poetry is aesthetic expression through words; it is art. Like art it is very difficult to define for it is an expression of the poet and may take any form the poet chooses for this expression.

Some might consider the study of poetry old fashioned, yet even in our hurried lives we are surrounded by it: children's rhymes, verses from songs, trite commercial jingles, well written texts. Any time we recognize words as interesting for sound, meaning or construct, we note poetics.

It is certainly a valid use of time, then, to study the poets who are considered the best; It will give us a background by which we might judge other use of language.

WORDS

In the past words were considered almost mystical, and those who mastered words could control the world about them. In every culture the namer of things and the collectors of names were held in high regard.

Our lives are filled with words. It is impossible to imagine life without words. With words we understand our surroundings. We communicate with all we meet. We are influenced by them and with them we influence our world.

By organizing words we develop concepts, express our hopes and fears, create imaginary worlds and entertain.

POETRY

Poetry is not easily defined. Often it takes the form of verse, but not all poetry has this structure. Poetry is a creative use of words which, like all art, is intended to stir an emotion in the audience. Poetry generally has some structure that separates it from prose.
LINES
The basic unit of poetry is the line. It serves the same function as the sentence in prose, although most poetry maintains the use of grammar within the structure of the poem. Most poems have a structure in which each line contains a set amount of syllables; this is called **meter**. Lines are also often grouped into **stanzas**.

STANZA
The stanza in poetry is equivalent or equal to the paragraph in prose. Often the lines in a stanza will have a specific rhyme scheme. Some of the more common stanzas are:
- **Couplet**: a two line stanza
- **Triplet**: a three line stanza
- **Quatrain**: a four line stanza
- **Cinquain**: a five line stanza

METER*
Meter is an organized way to arrange stressed/accented syllables and unstressed/unaccented syllables.

a. **stressed/accented syllables**: the symbol \( \sqrt{\) means strong emphasis is placed on that syllable.

b. **unstressed/unaccented syllables**: the symbol \( \_\) means weak emphasis is placed on that syllable.

ex: \( \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\) There was a young lady of Niger

REPETITION*
Repetition is the repetition a sound, word, or phrase for emphasis.

a. **rhyme**: the endings of the words sound the same.

ex: go, sew, mow

b. **alliteration**: the same **consonant** sound is repeated.

ex: Sarah slipped down the slick sidewalk.

c. **assonance**: the same **vowel** sound is repeated.

ex: The strange cane was lain in the lane.

d. **rhyme scheme**: a regular pattern of rhyme repeated in each stanza of a poem. Rhyme schemes are labeled with letters, so **abab** would be a quatrain with the first and third lines rhyming and the second and fourth lines rhyming.

ex: When I sit in the shade a
    Of the old maple tree, b
    I know I've got it made a
    In the land of the free. b

Poems of more than one stanza often repeat the same rhyme scheme in each stanza.
**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE***

Figurative language is used in poetry to compare two things that are usually not thought of as being alike.

a. *similes:* comparison using "like" or "as"
   
ex: The bread was as hard as a rock.

b. *metaphors:* directly stating a comparison
   
ex: It was raining cats and dogs.

* for additional information see page 123-124 in *The Language of Literature*

**IMAGERY**

Imagery is an appeal to the senses. The poet describes something to help you to see, hear, touch, taste, or smell the topic of the poem.

   
ex: Fog

   The fog comes
   on little cat feet.

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

   Carl Sandburg

**PREPOSITIONAL POETRY**

Prepositional poetry is a form of Free Verse. Prepositional poetry uses a series of prepositional phrases to establish structure.

The format for Prepositional poetry is to begin each line of the poem with a prepositional phrase except the last. The first line either begins at a distance from the topic and the following lines become gradually closer, or the first line begins close to the subject and the following lines become gradually more distant.

**EXAMPLES:**

Outside my bedroom window somewhere
Among some snow-laden hills
Near several piles of fieldstones
Along a misshapened fence
Beneath an ancient, gnarled oak tree
Under some fallen, decaying leaves
Above the frozen sleeping earth
Lies the buried treasure of the inquisitive squirrel.

   J. Tilden
DIAMOND POETRY

A structured poem with nouns, adjectives, and participles that make the shape of a diamond. The words in a diamond poem can be broken into sets of analogies. An analogy is made of two pairs of words that show a clear and distinct relationship.

Diamond poems have the following structure:

```
Noun
Adjective      Adjective
-ing           -ing            -ing       -ing
or Adverb     -ing           -ing     Adverb
Adjective      Adjective
Noun
```

Within this structure certain words are opposites:

```
Word 1
Word 2       Word 3
Word 4       Word 5       Opposite 5       Opposite 4
Opposite 3   Opposite 2
Opposite 1
```

The nouns are opposites and the adjectives form a crossing pattern. The first adjective in the second line being parallel to the second adjective in the third line. This parallel structure is repeated through the entire poem.

These poems can then be rewritten as analogies; for example, in the first example green is to summer as white is to winter. These analogies must be written in the following format.

EXAMPLES:

```
Summer
Green       Steamy
Sweating    Swimming    Sledding    Freezing
Frigid      White
Winter
```

**Analogies:**

```
GREEN:SUMMER::WHITE:WINTER
STEAMY:SUMMER::FRIGID:WINTER
SWEATING: SUMMER::FREEZING:WINTER
SKIING:SUMMER::SLEDDING:WINTER
```
Cat
Furry, Peaceful
Quietly Meowing - Barking Loudly
Obnoxious, Hairy
Dog

**Analogy:**

FURRY:CAT::HAIRY:DOG
PEACEFUL:CAT::OBNOXIOUS:DOG
QUIETLY: CAT::LOUDLY:DOG
MEOWING:CAT::BARKING:DOG

Siamese
Finicky, Reserved
Piercingly Yowling - Pawing Agreeably,
Gregarious, Amenable
Shepherd

**Analogy:**

FINICKY:SIAMESE::AMENABLE:SHEPHERD
RESERVEWD:SIAMESE::GREGARIOUS:SHEPHERD
PIERCINGLY: SIAMESE::AGREEABLY:SHEPHERD
YOWLING:SIAMESE::PAWING:SHEPHERD

**SENSORY EMOTION POETRY**

The Sensory Emotion poem is a Free Verse form. It is a seventeen poem that describes an emotion through color and the senses.

The Sensory Emotion poem has the following structure (each of the following is a line in the poem):

(Emotion) is (color)
It looks like...(two phrases)
It sounds like....(two phrases)
It smells like...(two phrases)
It tastes like...(two phrases)
It feels like...(two phrases)
(Emotion) is (metaphor)

When writing the Sensory Emotion poem it is often helpful to begin with a list of emotions or feelings. Happiness, sadness, depression, joyfulness, anger, surprise, elation, excitement, and playfulness are some examples. (Notice that the emotions listed are all abstract nouns.)
EXAMPLES:

Peacefulness is Christmas light white
It looks like a brightly lit evergreen tree on a chill winter's eve and small, sleeping children snuggled in bed,
It sounds like the quiet shushing of cross-country skis on fresh fallen snow and the echoes of "Silent Night" at midnight mass,
It smells like brewing spiced apple cider and the pine scent of the holiday tree that permeates through the house,
It tastes like warm chocolate-chip cookies right out of the oven and steaming hot cocoa with melted marshmallows floating on top,
It feels like warm furry bunny slippers and the warmth from a blazing yule fire,
Peacefulness is waking to the hushed sound of snowflakes falling and the faint jingle of bells just after midnight.

J. Tilden

Peace is white
It looks like a tree and kids sleeping,
It sounds like skiing and "Silent Night" at church,
It smells like hot apple cider and the Christmas tree,
It tastes like chocolate-chip cookies and hot cocoa,
It feels like warm slippers and the fire from a fireplace,
Peacefulness is the sound of it snowing at night.

STANZA POETRY

Stanza poetry has a set meter and rhyme scheme that is used over in each stanza. Stanza patterns may be quite intricate or simple, but the same pattern is repeated in each stanza. Many poems are written in traditional stanza forms like the sonnet, which has four quatrains followed by a couplet.

Some common stanza patterns are catalogued on page two of this packet.
EXAMPLES:

Do not go gentle into that good night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
To where it bent in the undergrowth:

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanting wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads onto way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

Robert Frost
Written Poetry Assignment:

You must create a booklet of poetry (in final draft format) with the following:

A cover page, and

The following three poems:

• One example of **prepositional poetry** using the correct structure:
  • Eight lines:
    • At least seven prepositional phrases each a separate line
    • A final line that identifies the topic
  • A near to far, or far to near pattern in the prepositional phrases
  • The poem must contain at least fifty words

• One **diamond poem** and the analogies used in the poem:
  • The poem must be in one of the correct formats,
  • The analogies used in the poem should be listed after the poem.

• One example of **sensory-emotion poetry** using the correct format:
  • Each of the following is a line in the poem:
    (Emotion) is (color)
    It looks like...(two phrases)
    It sounds like...(two phrases)
    It smells like...(two phrases)
    It tastes like...(two phrases)
    It feels like...(two phrases)
    (Emotion) is (metaphor)

• For your poetry book you must write one example of **stanza poetry**:
  • The poem must contain at least fifteen lines,
  • Each line must have at least six syllables,
  • There must be at least three stanzas with a regular meter and rhyme scheme.
## RUBRICS:

### Written Poetry Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL FORMAT</th>
<th>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE POETRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover page ____ (3 pts.)</td>
<td>7 phrases ____ (14 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final copy form ____ (5 pts.)</td>
<td>Uses prepositions -line ____ (7 pt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Near-Far/Far-Near ____ (3 pt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAMOND</td>
<td>SENSORY-EMOTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposites/related ____ (8 pts.)</td>
<td>Feeling/color ____ (3 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analogies ____ (6 pts.)</td>
<td>Senses (5) detailed phrases ____ (15 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct word types ____ (6 pts.)</td>
<td>Metaphor ____ (4 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANZA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 lines with 6 sylables ____ (8 pts.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 stanzas ____ (6 pts.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular rhyme scheme ____ (6 pts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL ____ (100 pts.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IDEAS - My message
- Inconsistent use of details; leaves the audience with a finished feeling; audience connects to the poetry

### ORGANIZATION - From beginning to end
- Clear, logical order with some lapses; correct format; pacing is smooth; some clear transitions

### VOICE - Putting feeling into the writing
- Clear personality; usually enthusiastic; straightforward; we hear you

### WORD CHOICE - Playing with language
- Colorful, vital; clear; some poetic applications

### POETIC FLUENCY - Listening to the sound
- Smooth rhythm, sounds somewhat musical, fairly easy to read aloud, may require the reader to stop to continue reading

### CONVENTIONS - Appropriate usage, etc.
- Few obvious errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, poetic format

## Poetry Oral Evaluation:

### IDEAS:
- Extensive poetic research; introduction states & defines theme; all poems are introduced with title/author; poetry mostly reflects theme; poetry mapping demonstrates understanding of the poem; naturally integrated transitions; conclusion restates theme with some explanation; conclusion leaves the audience with a finished feeling; audience connects to the poetry

### ORGANIZATION:
- Clear, logical order; introduction "hooks" audience; theme supports the organization; smooth pacing; mostly clear transitions; conclusion "echoes" introduction

### VOICE:
- Sincere; speaker reflects poetry tone

### WORD CHOICE:
- Colorful, clear; favorable for the audience

### USAGE CONVENTIONS:
- Few obvious errors in usage

### SPEAKING CONVENTIONS:
- Smooth rhythm, good pronunciation; normal pacing; normal speaking volume; easy to listen to

### PRESENTATION CONVENTIONS:
- Varying eye contact with the audience; natural gestures; appropriate; involves the audience

Poetry Unit 12.08.06

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P. 9
YOUR ORAL PRESENTATION:

To complete this unit you must choose poems that relate to a theme and create an oral presentation. You will be given several choices of pre-selected poems. The same selection may not be chosen by more than 3 people in the same class. It will be “first come; first serve” so make your selections early. You will need to write an introduction, transition, and conclusion that fit the criteria below.

Your presentation must must include:
- The poems or selections must be from the list below.
- A written introduction explaining your theme and why you chose it.
- Written transitions between each poem explaining how each poem relates to the theme, and stating the title and author of the next poem.
- Poetry map explaining each poem by defining its theme, characters, and plot (See below)
- A written conclusion in which you again state the theme and how you feel the poems represent the theme.
- Your presentation must last at least two minutes and no more than five minutes.
- I reserve the right to end long presentations.

The following are the selections that you may choose from. They are all taken from your Language of Literature text and are already printed on handouts for you. After you make your selection, pick up the handout from the teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Poems</th>
<th>Page in Lit text</th>
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<th>Page in Lit text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Celebration” and “Dirge Without Music”</td>
<td>p. 580</td>
<td>“The Lesson of the Moth” and</td>
<td>p. 315</td>
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<td></td>
<td>p. 53</td>
<td>“Think as I Think”</td>
<td>p. 620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Other Pioneers” and “Saying Yes”</td>
<td>p. 595</td>
<td>“My Enemy Was Dreaming” and</td>
<td>p. 268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 597</td>
<td>“A Man”</td>
<td>p. 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Willow and Ginkgo” and “Sea Lullaby”</td>
<td>p. 132</td>
<td>“Oil Crisis” and</td>
<td>p. 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 133</td>
<td>“We Alone” and</td>
<td>p. 176</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The Choice”</td>
<td>p. 621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mother to Son” and “Fairy Tale”</td>
<td>p. 314</td>
<td>“Foreign Student” and</td>
<td>p. 329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 675</td>
<td>“Rice and Rose Bowl Blues”</td>
<td>p. 626</td>
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<tr>
<td>“There’s this Thing I Like about Hockey my Lad” and “Mixed Singles”</td>
<td>p. 624</td>
<td>“The World is Not a Pleasant Place to Be” and “In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles”</td>
<td>p. 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 128</td>
<td></td>
<td>p. 158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I Belong” and “Mi Madre”</td>
<td>p. 623</td>
<td>“Lost” and</td>
<td>p. 269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 681</td>
<td>“My Mother Really Knew”</td>
<td>p. 676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Runaway” and “Moco Limping”</td>
<td>p. 407</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 127</td>
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</table>
Poetry Mapping

Directions: On your own paper use the following outline to organize information about poems.

I. Title of Poem

II. Theme

III. Conflict

IV. Resolution

V. Characterization
   A. First character
      1. Description
      2. What he or she does
   B. First character
      1. Description
      2. What he or she does

Include as many characters as necessary

VI. Lines _____
   A. Introduction
      1. Setting
         a) Time
         b) Place:

VII. Lines _____
   A. Chapter 1
      1. Chapter title
      2. Main events

VIII. Lines _____
   A. Chapter 2
      1. Chapter title
      2. Main events

Include as many chapters as necessary

IX. Lines _____
   A. Conclusion:
Outline for the Oral Poetry Presentation

Instructions: For your oral poetry presentation you need to write about the poetry you will be reading. Your presentation must include an introduction, a transition, poetry maps, and a conclusion. The following outline will help you complete this assignment. After your oral presentation you must turn in the written introduction, transitions, poetry maps, and conclusion.

I. Introduction
   A. Capture (How can you get your audience’s attention?)
   B. Why did you chose these poems?
   C. How are these two poems related to each other?
   D. What is the theme of your first poem?
      
      Read your first poem

II. Transition
   A. Use your poetry map (See above) to describe the first poem.
      1. When and where do the events happen?
      2. Who are the characters?
      3. What is the conflict and resolution
      4. Describe the main events of the chapters you found
   B. What is the theme of your second poem?

      Read your second poem

III. Transition
   A. Use your poetry map (See above) to describe the second poem.
      1. When and where do the events happen?
      2. Who are the characters?
      3. What is the conflict and resolution
      4. Describe the main events of the chapters you found

IV. Conclusion
   A. What was the theme of the entire presentation?
   B. How does each poem represent the theme?
   C. How can you echo the capture to give the presentation a finished feeling?