CHAPTER THREE

ELEMENTS AND DEVICES OF POETRY

There are several elements which make up a good poem. In brief, they are described below.

Rhythm: This is the music made by the statements of the poem, which includes the syllables in the lines. The best method of understanding this is **to read the poem aloud**. Listen for the sounds and the music made when we hear the lines spoken aloud. How do the words resonate with each other? How do the words flow when they are linked with one another? Does sound right? Do the words fit with each other? These are the things you consider while studying the rhythm of the poem.

Meter: This is **the basic structural make-up of the poem**. Do the **syllables** match with each other? Every line in the poem must adhere to this structure. A poem is made up of blocks of lines, which convey a single strand of thought. Within those blocks, a structure of syllables which follow the rhythm has to be included. This is the meter or the metrical form of poetry.

Rhyme: A poem may or may not have a rhyme. When you write poetry that has rhyme, it means that the **last words of the lines match with each other in some form**. Either the last words of the first and second lines would rhyme with each other or the first and the third, second and the fourth and so on. Rhyme is basically similar sounding words like '*cat' and 'hat*', *'close' and 'shows'*, *'house' and 'mouse'* etc. **Free verse poetry, though, does not follow this system.**

Alliteration: This is also used in several poems ***for sound effect***. Several words in the sentence may begin with the same alphabet or syllable sound. For example, in the sentence "**M**any **m**inute **m**iniature **m**oments," the sound of the alphabet '**M**' is repeated in all the four words continuously. When you say those words aloud, the sound effect generated is called Alliteration.

Example:

Nothing is as beautiful as spring
when **w**eeds, in **w**heels, shoot **l**ong and **l**ovely and **l**ush;

Here, both /w/ and /l/ sounds are alliterated and both are repeated three times.

Consonance is the repetition of same or similar consonant sounds that have different vowel sounds either within or at the end of any word in a poem. The resulting effect of consonance can be a half-rhyme also known as: partial –rhyme, Para-rhyme, near or imperfect rhyme. Sometimes it can also constitute alliteration with its repeated initial sounds and the half-rhyme which is formed and can add a musical texture to the sound of a poem. In general, consonance is used within lines to create a sound effect on the ear.

Example:

I thought of some who worked dark pi**ts**

Of war and, died
Digging the rock where Death repu**tes**
Peace lies indeed.

Comforted years will sit soft-chaired
In rooms of *amber*;
The years will stretch their hands, well-chaired
By our lives' *ember*.

The centuries will burn rich loads
With which we **groaned,**
Whose warmth shall lull their dreaming lids
While songs are **crooned**.
But they will not dream of us poor lads
Lost in the **ground**.
(From Miners.. by Wilfred Owen)

In the underlined words of the above poem, we find both consonance (ts, tes, ch, ds, gr,…) and alliteration with the repeated initial consonant sounds (/ch/, /l/, /gr/…)

Assonance is the repetition of same or similar vowel sounds in words very close to each other so that the ear identifies the rhyming echoes. It may occur at the beginning, center or end of any word in a poem and serve different sound effects. It is a form of rhyme which is sometimes known as vocalic rhyme.

Example:

All the **a**wful **a**uguries
Her goodly eyes l**i**ke Sapph**i**res sh**i**ning br**i**ght.

In the first line, **/ɔ:/** sound is assonated while in the second line **/α:i/** sound is assonated and the former repeated three times while the later is repeated four times.

Allusion in a work of literature is a reference, explicit or implicit, to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art. Most allusions serve to expand upon or enhance a subject, but some are used in order to undercut it ironically by the discrepancy between the subject and the allusion. When poets use allusions, they assume that they and their readers have a common body of knowledge.

Writers often make allusions to tales from the Bible, classical Greek and Roman myths, Plays by Shakespeare, historical or political events, and other materials with which they expect their readers to be familiar. Look at these three lines from Nashe's "Litany in Time of Plague"

Example:

Brightness falls from the air
Queens have died young and fair
Dust hath closed **Helen's** eye.

These lines used an explicit allusion to Helen of Troy.

Archaism is the use of words and expression that have become obsolete (out of date) in the common speech. Archaisms are most frequently encountered in poetry, law, science, technology, geography and ritual writing and speech. However, according to their deliberate use, they can be categorized into two—literary archaism, which seek to achieve a specific sound effect from the use of older speech (writing) and literary archaisms that use words not for a common use. In short archaisms are kept alive up to the recent day by these ritual and literary works and by the study of older literature. Almost all the works of Shakespeare, Spenser, Chaucer and the Bible are best examples of archaism.

Imagery: poets try to make readers experience ideas and events of a poem with their senses. Poets choose words that help readers ***see, hear, feel, taste*** and ***smell*** the things being described. The concept of imagery is a very simple one and although it is used a good deal in poetic writing it is of course found in other kinds of writing too. An image is a language used in such a way as to help us to see, hear, taste, feel, think about or generally understand more clearly or vividly what is being said or the impression that the writer wishes to convey. In the following poem, the poet uses the sight images to help the reader "see" the birds.

> Between the under and the upper blue
> All day the seagulls climb and swerve and soar

Symbolism: a symbol works two ways: It is something itself, and it also suggests something deeper. **It is crucial to distinguish a symbol from a metaphor**: Metaphors are comparisons between two seemingly dissimilar things; symbols associate two things, but their meaning is both literal and figurative. A metaphor might read, "His life was an oak tree that had just lost its leaves"; a symbol might be the oak tree itself, which would evoke the cycle of death and rebirth through the loss and growth of leaves. Some symbols have widespread, commonly accepted values that most readers should recognize: **ravens** signify death; **fruit** is associated with sensuality. Yet none of these associations is absolute, and all of them are really determined by individual cultures and time. No symbols have ***absolute*** meanings, and, by their nature, we cannot read them at face value.

Theme: This is what the poem is all about. The theme of the poem is the central idea that the poet wants to convey. It can be a story, or a thought, or a description of something or someone – anything which is what the poem is all about.

Simile: a simile is a method of comparison using the words 'like' or 'as'. When, in a poem, something is said to be 'like' another it means that the poet is using Simile to convey his feelings about what (s)he is describing. For example, in the statement '**Her laughter was like a babbling brook'**, the poet is comparing the laughter of the girl to the sound made by a babbling brook.

Metaphor: A metaphor is a method of comparison where the words 'like' and 'as' are not used. To modify the earlier example, if the statement used had been something like 'Her laughter, a babbling brook', then it would be the use of Metaphor.

Stanza forms and Metrical system in Poetry

A stanza refers to a number of lines of verse forming a separate unit within a poem. In many poems, each stanza has the same number of lines and the same rhythm and rhyme scheme.

A Stanza consists of two or more lines of poetry that together form one of the divisions of a poem. The stanzas of a poem are usually of the same length and follow the same pattern of meter and rhyme and are used like paragraphs in a story.

Some different types of stanzas are as follows:

Couplets - Couplets are stanzas of only two lines which usually rhyme

Tercets - Tercets are stanzas of three lines. The three lines may or may not have the same end rhyme. If all three lines rhyme, this type of tercet is called a **triplet**.

Quatrains - Quatrains are stanzas of four lines which can be written in any rhyme scheme.

Terza Rima

Terza rima is poetry written in three-line stanzas (or "tercets") linked by end-rhymes patterned ***aba, bcb, cdc, ded, efe***, etc. There is no specified number of stanzas in the form, but poems written in terza rima usually end with a single line or a couplet rhyming with the middle line of the last tercet.

Ode to the West Wind
by P. B. Shelley

I
O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's bein**g,**
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleein**g,**

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic re**d,**
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: 0 thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry be**d**

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and lo**w,**
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blo**w**

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fi**ll**
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hi**ll**:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;

Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear!

Ottova Rima is an Italian stanza form composed of eight lines, rhyming ***abababcc***.

Example

*The city winds down from another **day**,* *a*
The hum of business starting to abate. *b*
*As workers homeward plod their weary **way**,* *a*
Frustrations from the office dissipate. *b*
*Then at the station crowds seethe in **dismay** –* *a*
The trains to take them home are running late. *b*
*Some give up, and seek solace in a **pub**.* *c*
*But does drink mellow them? Aye, there's the **rub**!* *c*

Metrical System in Poetry

The word **meter**, which comes from the Greek word for "measure," refers to the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem. A poem's **metrical pattern** is determined by **scanning** the poem. **SCANSION** is the process of marking the **stressed** and **unstressed syllables** in a poem. A slant line (**/**) is used to mark a stressed (**a*ccented***) syllable. An **x** or a flattened out **u**-shape is used to mark an unstressed (***slack***) syllable. (I will use **x** for slack syllables, since I can't make the other symbol here.).

Not all poems are metrical. **Free verse** is poetry without an identifiable meter or rhyme scheme. **Blank verse**, though unrhymed, is metrical, because it has a specific metrical pattern--iambic pentameter.

The basic unit of meter is the ***foot***. A metrical foot usually (though not always) consists of **one accented syllable** and **one or two slack syllables**. There are other types of feet, but the feet most commonly used in English poetry are as follows:

iamb-- **x /** . . . .(adjective form = *iambic*)
trochee-- **/ x** . . . . . (adjective form = *trochaic*)
anapest-- **x x /** . . . . . .(adjective form = *anapestic)*
dactyl-- **/ x x** . . . . . .(adjective form = *dactylic*)
pyrrhic-- **x x** . . . . . (adjective form = *pyrrhic*)
spondee-- **/ /** . . . . . .(adjective form = *spondaic*)

The metrical pattern of a poem depends not only on the poem's most commonly used foot, but on the number of feet per line. The following lines

(with an approximate pronunciation guide, based on what is possible at this site) are the ones most commonly used in English poetry:

dimeter	--two feet per line
trimeter	--three feet per line
tetrameter	--four feet per line
pentameter	--five feet per line
hexameter	--six feet per line
heptameter	--seven feet per line
octameter	--eight feet per line

Poetic meter is the measure of a line of poetry. It is rhythm that can be measured in poems. Traditionally, the metrical structure of the poem is analyzed in terms of **feet**. A **foot** is a small number of consecutive syllables - normally two or three, sometimes four or more. Within the foot, syllables are characterized as stressed or unstressed. The foot is then classified according to the pattern of stresses within it, and given a name such as dactyl or iamb.

In poetry, meter is a recurring pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in lines of a set length. For example, suppose a line contains ten syllables (set length) in which the first syllable is unstressed, the second is stressed, the third is unstressed, the fourth is stressed, and so on until the line reaches the tenth syllable. The line would look like the following one (the opening line of Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18") containing a pattern of unstressed and stressed syllables. The unstressed syllables are in not in bold and the stressed syllables in bold.

Shall **I** com **PARE** thee **TO** a **SUM** mer's **DAY**?

Each pair of unstressed and stressed syllables makes up a unit called a **foot**. The line contains five feet in all, as shown next:

....1..... 2.....3.....4..... 5
Shall.**I..|..**com.**PARE..|..**thee.**TO..|..**a.**SUM..|..**mer's **DAY**?

.A foot containing an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (as above) is called an **iamb**. Because there are five feet in the line, all iambic, the **meter** of the line is **iambic pentameter**. The prefix *pent* in *pentameter* means *five* (Greek: *penta, five*). *Pent* is joined to words or word roots to form new words indicating five. For example, the Pentagon in Washington has five sides, the Pentateuch of the Bible consists of five books, and a pentathlon in a sports event has five events. Thus, poetry lines with five feet are in pentameter.

In English, poetic feet are limited to six: **iamb; trochee; spondee; dactyl; anapest; and pyrrhic. Note** two points here**. First, i**n a poetic foot, a syllable can be a complete word, as in *get lost.* **Secondly,** you should note that in employing the word *accent*, it must be conceded that anything heard in English is in somewhat accented; to differentiate between strong and weak sounds, then, unaccented means *weak*.

Iamb is one **unaccented** or weakly accented syllable followed by one strong **accent**, as in:

- ***impossible*** (two iambs in one word, light stress on first and third syllables, heavy stress on 2nd and 4th
- ***my* head *was* hot** (two iambs in four words, light stresses on first and third, heavier on second and fourth.

Trochee (Trochaic)
This is the opposite of an iambic meter. It begins with an accented then followed by an unaccented syllable. In other words the foot consists of an accented syllable followed by an unaccented. These are trochaic words: ***answer***, ***Tuesday***, ***Albert***. In these words, one strong accent followed by one weak or unaccented syllable, as in:

dreadful -- one trochee in one word
helpless -- one trochee in one word

Trochaic meter is also seen among the works of William Shakespeare:

Double, ***dou***ble, ***toil*** and ***trou***ble;
Fire ***burn*** and ***cauld***ron ***bubb***le.

Perhaps owing to its simplicity, though, trochaic meter is fairly common in children's rhymes:

Pet*er,* ***Pet****er* ***pump****kin-****eat****er*
Had *a* ***wife*** *and* ***could****n't* ***keep*** *her.*

Anapest

Anapestic foot consists of two unaccented syllables followed by an accented syllable. These words are anapestic: *cavalier*, *tambourine*, m*arianne*. It is foot which has two unaccented syllables followed by an accented syllable. Example: "***I a*rise *and un*build *it a*gain**" from Shelley's *Cloud*

Dactyl

Dactylic foot consists of an accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables. You can hear the dactylic beat in these words: ***beautiful***, ***silently***, ***Saturday***. It is foot including an accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables as in the word **o*penly***.

Dactyl, like the anapest, has naturally an energetic movement, making it suitable for poems with vigorous subjects, though not these only. Hardy's 'Voice' is a good example.

Woman much/ **missed**, how you/ **call** to me, /**call** to me,
Saving that now you are not as sure as you were
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,
Standing as when I drew near to the town
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
Even to the original air-blue gown! ...

Here are the symbolic markings for a few metrical lines, followed by the line names:

x / x / x / x / x / . . . iambic pentameter
x / x / x / x / . . iambic tetrameter
/ x / x / x / x / x / x . . . trochaic hexameter
x x / x x / x x / . . . . anapestic trimeter
/ x x / x x / x x / x x . . . dactylic tetrameter
x x / x x / . . . anapestic dimeter
/ x x / x / x / x / . . iambic pentameter with an initial trochaic substitution

The metrical pattern of a poem is determined by the poem's predominant meter. Metered poems will usually be quite regular, but in order to provide special emphasis in some places or to avoid monotony, poets often use substitutions in some of a poem's lines.

Activity:

Read the following poem and analyze its meter

"Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" by Adrienne Rich (1951)

Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,
Bright topaz denizens in a world of green.

They do not fear the men beneath the tree;
They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.
Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering through her wool
Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.
The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.
When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.
The tigers in the panel that she made
Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.

_____

_____

TIP: A Scan of Lines 1 and 2

To "scan" a poem, we mark each stressed and each unstressed syllable with a mark. Here, we'll use **/** for stressed and **~** for unstressed.

~	**/**	**~**	**~**	**/**	**~**	**/**	**~**	**/**	**~**	**/**
Aunt	Jennifer's	tigers	prance	across	the	screen			
~	**/**	**~**	**/**	**~**	**~**	**/**	**~**	**/**	**~**	**/**
Bright	topaz	denizens	of	a	world	of	green.		

Then we count the stressed syllables in a single line. Here there are 5 stressed syllables in each line.
Since Rich's poem has 5 stresses (**/**) per line, or **five poetic feet per line**, we can say that its meter is **pentameter**

Finally, we try to determine the **dominant** type of **stressed + unstressed** syllable combination which seems prominent throughout the poem. In Rich's poem, there are many alternations back and forth between unstressed and stressed syllables. Many look like this: **~ / ~ / ~ /(iambic)**

Then, we could say that its meter in the poem is **iambic pentameter**

Exercise

1. Distinguish between the four metrical patterns in English poetry: **Iamb**, **Trochee**, **Anapest** and **Dactyl**.

2. Match the following metrical patters with their correct name: where **'∪'** represents **unstressed syllable** while **'/'** represents **stressed syllable**

A	**B**
I. ∪/∪/∪/	a. Dactyl
II. /∪/∪/∪	b. Anapest
III. ∪∪/∪∪/∪∪/	C. Trochee

IV. /∪∪/∪∪/∪∪ d. Iamb

Questions to ask when analyzing a poem

Dear learner, the following are questions you can ask about any poem you encounter. Remember, however, that not all of the questions will apply to every poem you read, and also that you do not have to write about *every* answer to every question.

1. **Who is the speaker**? Is it the poet or a character/persona the poet takes on? What is the tone of voice adopted? Can you detect any irony? How precisely is the speaker defined? (Note: You should refer to the speaker as "the speaker" and not as "the poet," even if the voice seems to be the poet's own.
2. **Who is the speaker's audience**? Does the audience help to define the speaker?
3. What is the poem's **literal** meaning?
4. What is the poem's **theme**? Is the theme stated explicitly or implicitly?
5. What is the poem's **structure**? Does it develop in a straightforward manner to a logical conclusion? Is there a shift or turn in its development? How is the shift indicated? Why does a shift take place?
6. How is the poem **organized**? How does its organization contribute to the development of the poem's subject or theme?
7. What is the poem's **meter**? How does it contribute to the development of the poem's subject or theme? Are there any strategic points where the poem breaks with its **rhyme scheme**? Why?
8. What is the poem's rhyme scheme? How does it contribute to the development of the poem's subject or theme? Is there any evidence of **internal rhymes**, slant rhymes, etc?
9. Do the lines end with a completion of a thought or closed punctuation (i.e., are they end-stopped)? Or do the lines flow without pause, from one to the next (i.e., are they enjambed)? If enjambed, does it occur from one **couplet** to the next, one **quatrain** to the next, etc?
10. How would you characterize the poem's language or **diction** ? What effect does this choice of language have on your response to the poem and its speaker?
11. What **imagery** is developed in the poem? Does the poet use **metaphor**, simile, personification, etc? Does he/she use **symbolism**? Considering the poem's subject matter, are these images obvious ones, or are they unusual and unexpected? Do they contribute to the poem's subject or theme? If so, how?
12. Is there any evidence of repetition, **alliteration**, **onomatopoeia**, or other sound effects in the poem? What do they contribute?
13. Is there any significance to the **placement of words** in the poem? Is the rhythm of any particular words or lines noteworthy?

14. Is there any significance to the poem's **punctuation** or the **capitalization** and spelling of words? (Note: These features are often the result of modern editing and not original to the author

Practical Exercises

How to Identify Rhythm and Meter in Poetry

Rhythm and meter are two of the elements that establish the way a poem looks and sounds. Rhythm and meter are often confused but are actually inseparable in a poem. Meter is the measure of a line and rhythm is created in part by the meter. Identifying rhythm and meter in a poem is simple when you understand the way syllables and stress indications are used to create them.

Instructions:

1. **Learn the meaning of meter**. Meter is a recurring pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. These patterns are placed in sets throughout the poetry and each set is called a foot. A set of two syllables beginning with an unstressed syllable and ending with a stressed is called iamb or iambic; a spondee is two stressed syllables. Anapest is a three syllable foot consisting of unstressed, unstressed, stressed syllables. There are many different feet. Learning their names and the stress patterns is necessary for identifying meter in poetry.
2. **Read any poem and determine the line length**. There are many line lengths, including mono meter, dimeter, trimeter, pentameter and octameter. These line lengths are determined by the number of feet per line. A poem of five feet is pentameter; a poem with eight feet is octameter; trimeter is a poem with three feet
3. **Combine type of foot pattern with the number of feet to determine a poem's metrical pattern**. An iamb foot pattern combined with a line of five feet would be an iambic pentameter. A poem with a trochee foot (stressed, unstressed pattern) and a trimeter (three feet) combined would give the poem a trochaic tetrameter pattern

A poem is classified by both its rhythm and meter. To analyze a poem's rhythm and meter, lines of poetry are broken into feet. The rhythm and meter of poetry also define the cadence (tempo) used when reading a poem aloud. You need to be familiar with the following terms in analyzing a poem's meter and rhythm.

1. **Foot**: A foot is a unit of meter that consists of a combination of two or more stressed or unstressed syllables. When analyzing poetry, a stressed syllable is marked as (/) and an unstressed syllable is marked as (^).

2. **Meter:** Meter measures the audible features of poetry, and is described as the sequence of feet in a line. English poetry has five basic classifications of meters:

   Iambic: unstressed + stressed **(^/)**
   Trochaic: stressed + unstressed **(/^)**

Anapestic: unstressed + unstressed + stressed **(^^/)**
Dactylic: stressed + unstressed + unstressed (**/^^**)

Poetry meter additionally refers to the number of feet present in each line:

Monometer: one foot
Dimeter: two feet
Trimeter: three feet
Tetrameter: four feet
Pentameter: five feet
Hexameter: six feet

3. **Rhythm:** Poetry rhythm is the pattern associated with stressed and unstressed syllables in a line, and defines the cadence used when the poem is read aloud.

4. **Scansion:** Scansion is a method of describing the rhythm and meter of poetry by counting syllables, marking the locations of stressed and unstressed syllables, and dividing each line of poetry into feet.

5. **Rising Meter and Falling Meter:** Rising meter is a term used to define the movement of unstressed to stressed syllables in a single foot. Falling meter is a term used to define the movement from stressed to unstressed syllables in a single foot. Iambic is a rising meter, trochaic is a falling meter.

6. **Classification:** A poem is classified by its rhythm and meter. The repetition of a two syllable iambic foot in a five-meter line classifies a poem's rhythm and meter as being **iambic pentameter**. The repetition of a three syllable anapest in a three-meter line classifies a poem's rhythm and meter as being **anapestic trimeter**.

Activity: Scan the Rhythm pattern and Rhyme scheme of the following poem:

His wondrous gifts of love are plenteous
They grow out of the dark, rich, fertile earth;
This monument He built and left to us
Upon us He bestowed it at our birth,
He charged us with the task to multiply
And cultivate the earth till it bear fruit,
But only one lone wish would He deny
That we should eat of the forbidden fruit;
But we succumbed, by serpent were beguiled
By yielding to temptation were made wise
Of good and evil, beautiful and vile
Then claimed the serpent took us by surprise;
From His amazing grace we quickly fell
Then from the paradise we were expelled .

- C. O. Burleson

1. What type of poem is this?

2- Identify the rhythm pattern.

3- Who is "HE" in the poem?

4- To whom does "we" and "us" refer?

5- What famous place is pictured in this poem?

6. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

7. List three images that provide clues that help you recognize this place
8. What is the theme of this poem?
9. Give this poem a title that captures the theme of the poem.
10. On a separate sheet of paper, write a one page analysis of the poem following the steps given under explication.

A. Phonological figures (sound-oriented figures)

- **Alliteration** Repetition of initial **consonant** sounds in neighboring words. A subtype of 'consonance' (see below).
  - He **c**lasps the **c**rag with **c**rooked hands (Tennyson)
  - **L**ove's **L**abour's **L**ost (Shakespeare)
  - **P**eter **P**iper **p**icked a **p**eck of **p**ickled **p**epper
- **Assonance** Repetition of **vowel** sounds.
  - m***a***d ***a***s a h***a***tter
  - I s***aw*** old ***au***tumn in the musty m***o***rn (T. Hood)
- **Consonance** Repetition of consonant sounds.
  - *la**st*** but not *lea**st***.
  - Has your soul *sipped*/ Of the sweetness of all *sweets*?/ Has it well *supped*/ But yet hungers and *sweats*? (W. Owen)
- **Onomatopoeia** Imitation of the sound associated with a thing or an action.
  - Cock a doodle doo! My dame has lost her shoe. (Nursery rhyme)
  - The moan of doves in immemorial elms/ And murmuring of innumerable bees (Tennyson)

B. Syntactical figures (arrangement figures)

- **Inversion** Deviation from normal word order.
  - No living man/ all things can.
  - Strange fits of passion have I known. (Wordsworth)
- **Parallelism** Repetition of syntactical units (phrases, clauses, sentences).
  - easy come, easy go. Out of sight, out of mind.
  - O well for the fisherman's boy,/ That he shouts with his sister at play!/ O well for the sailor lad,/ That he sings in his boat on the bay! (Tennyson)

C. Semantic figures (meaning-related figures)

- **Oxymoron** Combination of incongruous words.

    - O heavy lightness! serious vanity!/ Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!/ Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health! (*Romeo and Juliet*)
- **Antithesis** Parallel arrangement of opposite terms.
    - Fair without, foul within.
    - My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. (*Hamlet*)
- **Paradox** Seemingly nonsensical or illogical statement; resolvable contradiction.
    - The child is father of the man. (Wordsworth)
    - In the midst of life we are in death.
- **Simile** A comparison of things or actions introduced by "like" or "as".
    - Like a bridge over troubled water/ I will lay me down.
    - I wandered lonely as a cloud (Wordsworth)
    - My love is like a red red rose (Burns)
- **Metaphor** A comparison of things or actions *not* introduced by "like" or "as".
    - You are a machine. (Shaw)
    - The apparition of these faces in the crowd;/ Petals on a wet, black bough. (Pound)
    - Sometime too hot the eye of heaven (= the sun) shines (Shakespeare)
    - The ship ploughs the waves.

  (A **dead metaphor** is an unoriginal metaphor, one that is in common use, e.g., *You are the apple of my eye*.)

- **Personification** Attribution of human qualities to a thing or an abstraction.
    - Fortune is blind.
    - The dish ran away with the spoon.
    - Because I could not stop for Death --/ He kindly stopped for me (E. Dickinson)
- **Hyperbola** Use of an exaggerated expression.
    - An hundred years should go to praise/ Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze./ Two hundred to adore each breast;/ But thirty thousand to the rest. (Marvell)
    - this/ fine specimen of hypermagical/ ultraomnipotence (Cummings)

Activity

Identify the rhetorical figures (figurative speeches) used in the following items.

1. For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky/ Lay like a load on my weary eye. *(Ancient Mariner)*

2. Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter. (Keats, "Ode On a Grecian Urn")
3. I wasted time, and now doth time waste me. *(Richard II,* V.v)
4. The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,/ The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes. (Eliot, "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock")
5. In every voice, in every ban,/ The mind-forged manacles I hear. (Blake, "London")
6. and it seems to me you lived your life/ like a candle in the wind.
7. Rain, rain go away, Come again another day.
8. It's the little things that make us bigger. (Advertisement)
9. A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on. (S. Goldwyn)
10. Small birds on stilts along the beach/ Rose up with piping cry. (O. Nash)
11. Little Big Man. (Film title)
12. Lies have short legs. (Proverb)