Appreciating Poetry
Studymate SYBA

Department of English

Pratap College Amalner

Sonnet 29

William Shakespeare

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Summary

‘When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes’ by William Shakespeare is one of several poems dedicated to the unknown “Fair Youth”.The poem details the speaker’s depression. He despairs over his state, his fate, and his difference from other luckier men. But, the second half of the poem asserts, this sadness goes away when he remembers his love. This person elevates him higher than a king.

Structure

‘When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes’ by William Shakespeare is a fourteen-line, traditional Shakespearean sonnet. The poem is structured in the form that has come to be synonymous with the poet’s name. It is made up of three quatrains, or sets of four lines, and one concluding couplet, or set of two rhyming lines.

The poem follows a consistent rhyme scheme that conforms to the pattern of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG, and it is written in iambic pentameter. This means that each line contains five sets of two beats, known as metrical feet. The first is unstressed, and the second is stressed. It sounds something like da-DUM, da-DUM. Saying this, there are some metrical irregularities like

Compiled & Edited by: Dr. Jitendra B. Patil, Department of English, Pratap College Amalner Dist.-Jalgaon (Maharashtra)-425401

trochees in lines 5, 6, and 10, the varied meter of line 3, and feminine endings in lines 9 and 11, reflecting the speaker's emotional turmoil and rhythmic instability.

As is common in Shakespeare's poems, the last two lines are a rhyming pair, known as a couplet. They often bring with them a turn or volta in the poem. They're sometimes used to answer a question posed in the previous twelve lines, shift the perspective, or even change speakers. In this case, the turn is followed by a summary of the speaker's attitude. Despite his depressive moments, he would not change anything when he thinks of "thee."

Poetic Techniques

Shakespeare makes use of several poetic techniques in 'When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes'. These include but are not limited to, alliteration, simile, and enjambment. The first, alliteration, occurs when words are used in succession, or at least appear close together, and begin with the same sound. For example, "all alone" in line two and "hymns" and "heaven" in line twelve.

Another important technique commonly used in poetry is enjambment. It occurs when a line is cut off before its natural stopping point. Enjambment forces a reader down to the next line and the next quickly. One has to move forward in order to comfortably resolve a phrase or sentence. For example, the transition between lines eleven and twelve.

A simile is a comparison between two unlike things that uses the words "like" or "as". A poet uses this kind of figurative language to say that one thing is similar to another, not like a metaphor, that it "is" another. In the sestet, Shakespeare's speaker compares his rising mood when he thinks about his love to a lark taking off from the sullen earth.

Detailed Analysis

Lines 1-4

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,

I all alone beweep my outcast state,

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,

And look upon myself and curse my fate,

In the first lines of 'When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,' the speaker begins by describing a particular mental and emotional situation he's often in. "When," he says, he feels disgraced in the eyes of luck or fortune, and "men," he finds himself weeping over his outcast state. At these moments, he feels terrible, as though heaven is deaf to his plight and God is not listening to his cries. This mournful speaker curses his "fate," whatever that may be.

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Lines 5-8

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,

Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,

With what I most enjoy contented least;

The next quatrain continues on the same themes. He wishes, in these moments, that he was more hopeful. That he had the characteristics of those who are "more rich in hope" than he. The idealized man this speaker has in mind has a lot of friends and a "scope" that is more pleasing. He has more opportunities than the speaker does and a lot more skills. Although the speaker does not reveal in these lines what he is so upset about, it is clearly something fundamental. He feels as though he's lacking something that other men have. He adds at the end of this quatrain that he no longer enjoys that which he used to love the most. The man is in a deep depression.

Lines 9-14

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,

(Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

In the last six lines of 'When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,' the speaker, unlike in most of Shakespeare's sonnets, does not provide a solution to the problem. There does not appear to be a clear way out of this mindset, but there is a balm.

When he is despaired about his own fate and life, he thinks of "thee" This "thee" is the "fair youth" to whom so many of Shakespeare's sonnets are dedicated. He thinks about this person, becomes happy, and his state is improved. He uses a similar to compare his rising spirits to a "lark at break of day arising / From sullen earth."

The speaker, as a lark, leaves behind all his mundane earthly problems and is elevated to a higher plane. He feels, in these happier moments, that he is able to sing hymns at "heaven's gate" directly to God.

The final lines of 'When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes' summarize the previous twelve. They state very clearly that the fair youth's love is the only thing that brings the speaker happiness. He feels wealthy in these moments, richer than kings. There is no one he'd rather trade places with.

Death, be not Proud (Holy Sonnet 10)

John Donne

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Summary

In 'Death, be not proud,' the speaker directly addresses death using the personal pronoun "you" throughout the poem. Initially, he tells death not to be proud, refuting its

perceived power and fearfulness. Some people might think it is mighty and fearful, but it isn't. He asserts that those whom death believes it has overthrown have not truly died and scorns death by declaring, "poor Death," you cannot kill me.

The speaker further diminishes death's significance by likening it to sleep and rest, saying they are death's images only. He argues that death is even more pleasurable than these, and the best men among us soon achieve death, getting the "Rest of their bones and soul's delivery," i.e., getting their physical body to rest and the soul liberated.

As the sonnet progresses to the sestet, the speaker's attack on death intensifies. He denounces death as a slave to "fate, chance, kings, and desperate men" and accuses it of having associations with and dwelling with "poison, war, and sickness." Further, the speaker contends that poppy and charms can induce sleep just as effectively as death and are, in fact, better than death's "stroke." So, he questions why death swells with pride.

The poem concludes with a final couplet that reveals death's true nature: it is merely a short sleep between earthly life and eternal awakening in the afterlife. Thus, the impermanent death itself will ultimately die after the soul has journeyed into the afterlife, as the speaker proclaims, "And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die."

Written in the 17th century, 'Death, be not proud' reflects a time when religious belief was deeply entrenched. However, the world has since undergone profound shifts, from Darwin's On the Origin of Species to modernist disillusionment and postmodernist existentialism, leading to a decline in religious faith. The poem may come across as whimsical to the modern reader, with the speaker's disdain for death seeming more like a bitter personal resentment than a serious argument. The speaker may seem disillusioned or troubled as he lashes out at death. Thus, the speaker's disillusionment might be interpreted psychoanalytically as a projection of his own sadness and repressed anger onto death (Along with religious and financial struggles, Donne was ill with a fever, and death might have seemed imminent). His bitter, vehement address to death could be seen as a manifestation of his internal struggles and frustration, revealing deeper layers of psychological conflict beneath the surface of his rhetorical indignation.

Structure and Form

'Death, be not proud' is a sonnet that blends elements of both the Petrarchan and English sonnet forms. The poem begins with an octave (ABBA ABBA) that presents an argument against death's power, followed by a sestet (CDDCEE) that intensifies the argument and concludes with a forceful couplet. The subtle volta occurs at line 9, where the rhyme scheme shifts, indicating a deepening of the speaker's defiance against death.

The poem's rhyme scheme begins with ABBA ABBA, typical of a Petrarchan sonnet, then transitions into CDDCEE, akin to the English sonnet form. This blending of forms emphasizes the logical progression of the argument against death, with the final rhymed couplet delivering a powerful, conclusive statement that underscores death's ultimate defeat in the face of eternal life.

The poem is written in iambic pentameter, where each line typically contains five iambic feet, or ten syllables following an unstressed-stressed pattern (da-DUM). This steady meter reinforces the poem's calm, assertive tone, reflecting the speaker's confidence in the argument against death's power. Although there are some slight variations and emphasis to the meter (such as lines 1 at the start, 9, 11, and 13) the meter provides a rhythmic backbone that mirrors the logical, unwavering dismantling of death's supposed might.

Detailed Analysis

Lines 1-2

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

The speaker immediately creates a personified version of death by talking directly to it. He paints a picture of death as an arrogant being, and one who needs to be humbled. The speaker assumes the position of the one who must humble this being, death. He tells it that it ought not to be so proud, even though for generations, people have feared death and called it "mighty and dreadful." The speaker, however, with a voice of absolute authority on the matter, simply states, "thou art not so". This poet uses the literary tactic of "apostrophe" to drive home his point. Apostrophe occurs when a writer addresses a subject who cannot respond. Readers know immediately that this sonnet will consist of one speaker who will do all of the talking and accuse its subject. Death, though adequately personified, cannot respond to the accusations of the speaker.

Lines 3-4

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

Here in 'Death, be not Proud', the speaker accuses the death of having illusions of grandeur. He claims that while death thinks that it has the power to kill, it actually does not. The speaker first humbles death by telling it that the idea that it has the power to overthrow lives is simply an illusion and that it has no such power at all. Then, to further humiliate death, the speaker calls it "poor Death". It sounds almost as if the speaker is making fun of death for having lived under the illusion that it had any sort of power over life or death. Then, he addresses death in a more personal manner, challenging it by saying, "yet canst thou kill me." It seems dangerous for one to threaten death in this way. However, knowledge of John Donne's

background and ideologies can give some insight into the speaker's confidence here. Though everyone knows that physical death does indeed occur, the speaker is challenging death in a different way. He uses the Christian theology of eternity to taunt death by telling it, essentially, "Even if you take my physical body, you can never truly kill me."

Lines 5-6

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

With these lines, the speaker compares death to "rest and sleep" and even uses the word "pleasure" to describe how one should feel about death. Just as a restful night of sleep brings pleasure, so should death. The speaker implies that sleep is simply a small glimpse of death. Thus, there is nothing to fear in death, for death will bring something like a pleasurable sleep.

Lines 7-8

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Here in 'Death, be not Proud', the speaker says that the best men seem to experience death the soonest. While others have long questioned why it seems as if the best people die soonest, the speaker offers an answer here, suggesting that the best among men deserve to experience the peaceful rest of death sooner without having to endure the agonies of a long life on the earth. The speaker describes death as the "rest of their bones" and "soul's delivery." Both of these descriptions make death seem like a welcome friend who comes to graciously offer rest and peace and the deliverance of one's soul from an earthly body where pain and suffering abide.

Lines 9-10

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

Here, the speaker takes on a stronger tone and begins to taunt death with more ferocity than he did at first. Here, he calls death a slave to "chance, kings, and desperate men." He tells death that it is not mighty and dreadful but rather a poor slave who cannot even act on its own but is driven not only by fate and chance but also by people, rich and poor alike. He then accuses death of having lowly companions such as "poison, war, and sickness". He has taunted death, telling it that it is not to be feared but rather that it is a slave to the will of fate and men and that, as a lowly slave, his companions are even lower beings, such as sickness and war. These accusations allow the readers to feel a sense of power and victory over death. The

speaker certainly feels authority over death, and he passes this feeling along to his readers when he puts death in his place by talking down to it.

Lines 11-12

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

The speaker continues to taunt death even more, saying that all he brings is a little sleep, and he doesn't even do that as well as some other bringers of rest, such as "poppy" or "charms." This comparison further portrays death as something not only weak but even pleasurable. The speaker questions death, asking, "why swell's thou then?" He is asking it why it is so puffed up with pride when it cannot even do its job as well as others can.

Lines 13-14

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die

With these final lines of 'Death, be not Proud', the speaker reveals exactly why he has been taunting death so relentlessly. Although it is obvious that death is real and that people who experience death do not come back to earth, the speaker reveals his reasons for claiming that death is weak and easily overcome. He claims that death is only "one short sleep" and that those who experience death "wake eternally". Then, he claims that "death shall be no more". Finally, he tells death, "thou shalt die". The speaker has not only told death that it has no real power over anyone but that it will experience the end of itself when all wakes in eternity, and death will be no more.

'Holy Sonnet 10,' written between 1609 and 1610, is the tenth in Donne's series of nineteen 'Holy Sonnets,' recognized as one of his best works. This sonnet illustrates Donne's poetic ability with its personification of death and the creative use of the apostrophe. He frequently explored the idea of true religion in his poetry. The sonnet's defiant stance against death resonates with Donne's Anglican beliefs and personal suffering as 'Holy Sonnets' were written during a tumultuous period—having converted to Anglicanism and while suffering from a debilitating fever, Donne wrote this sonnet against death.

The World is Too Much With Us

William Wordsworth

The world is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;

The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

Analysis, Line by Line

Lines 1-2

The world is too much with us: late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers

The speaker begins The World is Too Much With Us with the term "the world" and the reader quickly begins to understand what that term means in this context. He is talking about worldly cares and concerns such as money, possessions, and power. And he concludes that it is "too much with us" meaning that we care far too much about these worldly things. He gives more depth of thought to this idea when he suggests that by using our time, minds, and energy in "getting and spending" that we "lay waste our powers". In other words, people have powers beyond that which they have tapped into because they are so busy getting and spending.

They are tied up in their greed for more money and their time is accounted for by their actions of getting money, spending money, and caring for their possessions. He believes that money and worldly possessions are far more important to people than they should be. He continues,

Lines 3-4

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

In these lines, the speaker contrasts Nature with "The World". He reveals that while people spend their time in acquiring worldly possessions, the true beauty of the earth cannot be owned. He reveals that very few things that people see in Nature actually belong to them. He then laments, "We have given our hearts away". He believes that where we should enjoy nature, though it is not ours to own, instead we are filled with greed and we acquire wealth and worldly possessions rather than enjoying nature. The speaker then continues by describing the beauties of nature that people are missing out on by being so caught up in the want for money and possessions.

Lines 5-7

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;

The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

In these lines of The World is Too Much With Us, the speaker describes the beauties of nature that most people are missing out on. He describes the sea, and the wind, and the flowers. His description of these parts of nature use personification to help the reader to connect with each description. The sea "bares her bosom to the moon" which suggests an intimacy between the moon and the sea. The winds "howl". This gives the wind human emotion.

The flowers "sleep". Giving these parts of nature human attributes helps the reader to feel this connection with nature. It paints a picture of nature and allows the reader to understand what he is missing out on by being caught up in worldly possessions and greed.

Lines 8-10

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

These lines are the speaker's final exclamation that "we are out of tune" with nature because we are so caught up in worldly wealth. Here, the speaker swears an oath that he would rather be a poor pagan than be so distracted by worldly wealth so as to render himself unable to enjoy the true beauties of life. He appeals to God and even exclaims that he would rather be a pagan than to be out of touch with nature.

Lines 11-14

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

In these final lines, the speaker reveals that if he were a poor pagan, he would have "glimpses" of nature that would give him joy and hope, or at least make him feel "less forlorn". He would rather be poor and helpless and connected with nature than rich and powerful and alienated from it.In the final two lines, he refers to two pagan gods. Proteus was though t to be able to tell the future, though he avoided doing so if he could.

The speaker implies that had he been a pagan, perhaps he could imagine being in touch with Proteus, or at least catching a glimpse of him as he stares out across the sea. Triton was the pagan god that was said to be able to calm the waves of the sea. This implies that the speaker looks out at the sea, enjoying nature, long enough to see Triton and Proteus. The speaker refers to these two pagan gods after he first appeals to God and swears that he would rather be a pagan than be alienated from nature.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

John Keats

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Summary

'Ode on a Grecian Urn' by John Keats muses and celebrates art's ability — in this case the images upon a piece of ancient Greek pottery — to capture and immortalize life's beauty. In this poem, Keats (or at least, the speaker in the poem) mulls over the strange idea of the

human figures carved into the urn. They are paradoxical figures, free from the constraints and influences of time but at the same time, imprisoned in an exact moment. For all that they don't have to worry about growing old or dying, they cannot experience life as it is for the rest of humanity.

'Ode on a Grecian Urn' represents three attempts at engaging with the urn and its scenes. Across the stanzas, Keats tries to wonder about who the figures are, what they're doing, what they represent, and what the underlying meaning of their images might be. But by the end of the poem, he realizes that the entire process of questioning is fairly redundant.

'Ode on a Grecian Urn' waxes lyrical and philosophical over the images sculpted into the side of a relic from an ancient civilization. Keats uses imagery to depict the stimulus that art provides our imagination with, transforming a seemingly static illustration into a vision as colorful and dynamic as life itself. His speaker — as evidenced in stanzas two and three — appears to prefer the idealized world preserved by art over reality itself. Their reverential overtures communicate not only a passion for art's beauty and power but also its tendency to outlast humanity: "Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought / As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral! / When old age shall this generation waste, / Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe." Idling between the poignant recognition of one's mortality in the face of the urn's immortality, it's difficult not to feel yourself swept up in the ardent praise lauded by Keats.

Meaning

The title of the poem 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' gives readers the central idea firsthand. It is a poetic representation of a piece of art, specifically the beautiful paintings on a Grecian urn. The poetic persona has encountered the urn with utter astonishment. He is rather astounded by the artist who has created this everlasting piece. The depictions on the vase raise several questions in the onlooker's mind. Through this poem, Keats' persona describes it beautifully. In the end, he proclaims the everlastingness of art through the line "Beauty is truth, truth beauty".

Structure

Like other entries in Keats's series of "Great Odes of 1819," 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' builds on a specific structure. Its closest formal cousin is probably 'Ode on Indolence,' though it contains a slightly different rhyme scheme. Split into five verses (stanzas) of ten lines each, and making use of fairly rigid iambic pentameter, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' is very carefully put together.

The rhyme scheme is split into two parts, with the final three lines of each stanza varying slightly. For the first seven lines, a rhyme scheme of ABABCDE is used, though the instance of the CDE part is not always as strict. In verse one, the final three lines are DCE; in the second verse, they're CED; stanzas three and four both use CDE, while the fifth and final stanza uses DCE. This gives the piece a ponderous feel, adding a sense of deliberation to the final lines of each verse while still adhering to the form.

Just like in his other odes, the splitting of the verses into rhymes of four lines and six lines creates a distinct sense of there being two parts to each verse. As it is, this typically means

that the first four lines (ABAB) are used to set out the verse's subject, while the final six lines mull over what it means.

Literary Devices

The major literary devices that are used in Keats' ode are mentioned below:
Apostrophe:
This ode begins with an apostrophe. Keats directly invokes the urn at the beginning. It also occurs in the following examples: "O mysterious priest" and "O Attic shape!"
Metaphor:
Keats uses metaphors in "unravish'd bride of quietness," "foster-child of silence and slow time," "ditties of no tone," etc.
Paradox:
The first three lines are paradoxical. In these lines, the poet refers to the Grecian urn from three perspectives. Each reference is contradictory to the other. It also occurs in the following lines: "Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve; / She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss"
Alliteration:
"leaf-fring'd legend," ye soft pipes, play on," "heart high-sorrowful," etc.
Rhetorical Question:
The last three lines of the first stanza contain this device. For example: "What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?"

Themes

Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' taps on the themes of the immortality of art, beauty, and romanticism. The main theme of this poem is the immortality of art. To depict this theme, Keats uses a Grecian urn and the emotive paintings on this piece. Each painting incites complex emotions in the speaker's mind. He expresses his thoughts regarding the depictions. By doing this, he tries to portray the everlastingness of art or this special vase. Keats contrasts art with humans to portray that art exists forever even if the artist is no more. Besides, the themes of nature and beauty, and nature are also integral to the central idea of this ode.

Stanza One
Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

During this first verse, we see the narrator announcing that he is standing before a very old urn from Greece. The urn becomes the subject of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,' so all of the ideas and thoughts are addressed towards it. On the urn, we are told there are images of people who have been frozen in place for all of the time, as the "foster-child of silence and slow time."

The narrator also explains to us that he is discussing the matter in his role as a "historian" and that he's wondering just what legend or story the figures stuck on the side of the pottery are trying to convey. One such picture, seemingly showing a gang of men as they chase some women, is described as a "mad pursuit" but the narrator wants to know more about the "struggle to escape" or the "wild ecstasy." The juxtaposition between these two ideas gives an insight into how he is projecting different narratives onto one scene, unsure of which one is true.

Stanza Two
Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

During the second verse, the reader is introduced to another image on the Grecian urn. In this scene, a young man is sitting with a lover, seemingly playing a song on a pipe as they are surrounded by trees. Again, the narrator's interest is piqued, but he decides that the "melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter."

Unaffected by growing old or changing fashions, the notes the narrator imagines the man playing offer unlimited potential for beauty. While the figures will never grow old, the music also contains an immortal quality, one much "sweeter" than regular music. The narrator comforts the man, who he acknowledges will never be able to kiss his companion, with the fact that she will never lose her beauty as she is frozen in time.

Stanza Three
Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

The third stanza again focuses on the same two lovers but turns its attention to the rest of the scene. The trees behind the pipe player will never grow old and their leaves will never fall, an idea which pleases the narrator. Just like the leaves, the love shared between the two is equally immortal and won't have the chance to grow old and stale. Normal love between humans can languish into a "breathing human passion" and become a "burning forehead and a parching tongue," a problem that young lovers will not face.

In attempting to identify with the couple and their scene, the narrator reveals that he covets their ability to escape from the temporary nature of life. The piper's song remains new forever while his lover remains young and beautiful. This love, he believes, is "far above" the standard human bond which can grow tired and weary.

The parched tongue he references seems to indicate that he's worried about the flame of passion diminishing as time passes, something that won't worry the young couple. On viewing the figures, the narrator is reminded of the inevitability of his own diminishing passions and regrets that he doesn't have the same chance at immortality as the two figures on the urn.

Stanza Four
Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

The fourth stanza of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' really begins to develop the ideas. Turning to another image on the urn, this time a group of people bringing a cow to be sacrificed, the narrator begins to wonder about the individuals' lives. We also see the speaker in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' attempt to think about the people on the urn as though they were functioning in

regular time. This means that he imagines them to have had a starting point – the "little town" – and an endpoint – the "green altar."

In turn, he imagines the "little town" they come from, now deserted because its inhabitants are frozen in the image on the side of the urn "for evermore." This hints at what he sees as the limitations of the static piece of art, in that the viewer can never discern the human motivations of the people, the "real story" that makes them interesting as people.

The narrator's attempts to engage with the figures on the urn do change. Here, his curiosity from the first stanza evolves into a deeper kind of identification with the young lovers, before thinking of the town and community as a whole in the fourth. Each time, the reach of his empathy expands from one figure to two, and then to a whole town. But once he encounters the idea of an empty town, there's little else to say. This is the limit of the urn as a piece of art, as it's not able to provide him with any more information.

Stanza Five
O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

The final stanza is perhaps the most famous piece of poetry Keats ever wrote. This time, he is talking directly to the urn itself, which he believes "doth tease us out of thought." Even after everyone has died, the urn will remain, still providing hints at humanity but no real answers. This is where we come to the conclusions he draws. There is a sense that the narrator finds the lack of change imposed upon the figures to be overwhelming. The urn teases him with its immortal existence, feeding off the "hungry generations" (a line from 'Ode to a Nightingale') and their intrigue without ever really providing answers.

The urn is almost its own little world, living by its own rules. While it might be interesting and intriguing, it will never be mortal. It's a purely aesthetic piece of art, something the speaker finds to be unsatisfying when compared to the richness of everyday human life. The last lines in the piece have become incredibly well-known. They can be read as an attempt, to sum up, the entire process of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' in one couplet. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" as an idea has proved very difficult to dissect, however, due to its mysteriousness. It's unclear whether the sentiment is spoken by the narrator, the urn, or by Keats himself, thanks to the enigmatic use of quotation marks.

The source of the speech matters. If it's the narrator, then it could mean that he has become aware of the limitations of such a static piece of artwork. If it's the urn, then the idea that one piece of art (or self-contained phrase) could encompass humanity in any kind of complete fashion is nonsensical, and the line deliberately plays off this.

There's a futility in trying to sum up the true nature of beauty in just twenty syllables, a fact that might actually be the point of the couplet. Thanks to the dense, complicated nature of the final two lines, the ending remains open to interpretation.

The Elements of Poetry

Poetry is an intricate literary form that incorporates rhyme, figurative language, sound devices, and meter in order to evoke a wide array of meanings. The language of poetry is not always straightforward. It guides readers to reach a conclusion but never gives out any details explicitly. Such is the beauty of a poetry text that demands readers' attentive and creative participation. With the knowledge of the important poetry elements, we can understand a poem's message and appreciate the text more effectively.

Structure and Form

Poetry comes in a variety of forms and in each form follows a specific structure. For example, the sonnet form containing a set structure is different from odes. A free verse poem does not have metrical regularity, which can be found in a blank verse poem.
The structural elements found in poetry are:

Stanza: is a group of lines set off from others by a blank line or indentation.
Verse: are stanzas with no set number of lines that make up units based on sense.
Canto: is a stanza pattern found in medieval and modern long poetry.

Some of the important poetry forms include:

Sonnet: is a fourteen-line poem with a set rhyme scheme, often divided into quatrains, octaves, and sestets.
Ode: is a formal lyric poem written in celebration or dedication of something with specific intent.
Lyric: is a personal piece of poetry that tends to be shorter, melodic, and contemplative.
Elegy: is a mournful poem, especially a lament for the dead.
Villanelle: is a nineteen-line poem comprising five triplets with a closing quatrain.
Limerick: is a humorous piece of poetry that consists of five lines with the same rhythm.

Haiku: is a form of unrhymed Japanese poetry containing three sections with 17 syllables arranged in a 5-7-5 pattern.

Meter

Meter is the definitive pattern found in verse. Some of the important metrical feet in English poetry include:

Iamb: consists of one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, as in des-pair, ex-clude, re-peat, etc.
Trochee: is a metrical foot containing one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable, as in sis-ter, flow-er, splin-ter, etc.
Dactyl: comprised one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables, as in si-mi-lar.
Anapest: consists of three syllables, where the first two are unstressed and the last one is stressed, as in com-pre-hend.
Spondee: contains two stressed syllables, like "drum beat".
Pyrrhic: is the opposite of spondee and contains two unstressed syllables.

Poets utilize these metrical feet to create a pattern, which is called a metrical pattern or metrical scheme. Some of the important metrical patterns include:

Iambic pentameter: occurs when the lines of a poem contain five iambs each. Shakespeare's sonnets are written in this meter.
Iambic tetrameter: is another important metrical pattern. It occurs when the lines have four iambs each, as in Robert Frost's poem 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'.
Trochaic tetrameter: is the recurring pattern of four trochees per line. In 'The Song of Hiawatha,' Henry Wadsworth Longfellow uses this meter.
Trochaic octameter: occurs when verse lines contain eight trochees each. Edgar Allan Poe's best-known poem 'The Raven' is written in this meter.

Rhyme and Rhyme Scheme

Rhyme is the repetitive pattern of sounds found in poetry. They are used to reinforce a pattern or rhyme scheme. In specific poetry forms such as ballads, sonnets, and couplets, the rhyme scheme is an important element. The common types of rhymes used in poetry are:
End Rhyme: is a common type of rhyme in poetry that occurs when the last word of two or more lines rhyme.
Imperfect Rhyme: is a type of rhyme that occurs in words that do not have an identical sound.
Internal Rhyme: occurs in the middle of lines in poetry.
Masculine Rhyme: is the rhyming between stressed syllables at the end of verse lines.
Feminine Rhyme: is the rhyming between unstressed syllables at the end of verse lines.

Sound and Rhythm

Sound and rhythm are other important elements of poetry. The sound of a poetic text means how a line or what sounds some specific words evoke in readers' minds. Rhythm is a set pattern that is formed by these sounds. In poetry, rhythm refers to the metrical rhythm that involves the arrangement of syllables into repeating patterns called feet. For example, the following lines from William Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 116' contain an iambic rhythm with a few variations:

Let me/ not to/ the mar/-riage of/ true minds

Ad-mit/ im-pe/-di-ments./ Love is/ not love

Which al/-ters when/ it al/-te-ra/-tion finds,

Or bends/ with the/ re-mo/-ver to/ re-move:

Subject

The subject or content of poetry differs across a variety of forms. A subject is what the poem is about. For instance, the subjects of sonnets include love and admiration for one's beloved, heartache and separation. Whereas divine sonnets include the subjects of devotions to God, enlightenment, and salvation. Elegies are written in memory of someone who is no more. Therefore, the subject of these poems is a dead person.

Speaker

Speaker is one who narrates the poem. In poetry, we tend to think that the poet is the speaker himself. However, it is not always the case. Sometimes, poets assume an imaginative character and write the poem from their perspective. Generally, the poem is told from the perspective of a first-person speaker or a third-person speaker. Poets also use the second-person point of view in order to communicate directly with readers. Understanding the speaker helps us to know the poem's tone and mood.

Theme

The theme is a recurring idea or a pervading thought in a work of literature. Poetry themes include some common ideas such as love, nature, beauty, and as complex as death, spirituality, and immortality. An understanding of the theme helps readers to identify the core message of the poem or the poet's purpose for writing the poem. For example, the following lines of Robert Burns' 'A Red, Red Rose' exemplify the theme as well as the underlying message of the entire poem:

O my Luve is like a red, red rose

That's newly sprung in June;

O my Luve is like the melody

That's sweetly played in tune.

This piece is written in admiration of the speaker's beloved. Therefore, the main themes of the poem are beauty, love, and admiration.

Tone and Mood

Diction is another significant aspect of poetry. It refers to the language, sound, and form used in a particular piece of poetry. The tone or attitude of a poem's speaker and the mood of the entire text is part of poetic diction. To understand the speaker's attitude or tone to the subject, readers have to look for the poet's choice of words, figurative language, and sound devices. The mood is related to the impression of the text upon readers. Explore these lines from Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale':

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,

But being too happy in thine happiness,

That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,

Singest of summer in full-throated case.

In these lines, the speaker describes the nightingale's song in an elevated language. He is awe-struck after listening to its intoxicating song. Thus, the tone is emotive, pleasant, and elated. The mood of the poem is happy and positive.

Syntax

The syntax is the ordering of words into meaningful patterns. Poetry has a distinct syntax compared to prose, fiction, and other forms of literature. Poets manipulate the conventional syntax to emphasize specific words. The purpose of adopting a specific syntax and diction is to achieve certain artistic effects such as tone, mood, etc. For instance, in Dickinson's 'A Narrow Fellow in the Grass,' the speaker describes her surprise and amusement upon the discovery of a snake. To convey her feelings, Dickinson uses a specific syntax:

A narrow fellow in the grass

Occasionally rides;

You may have met him-did you not

His notice sudden is,

IDENTIFYING POETIC FEET AND METER

When analyzing a poem, you may be asked to determine the **Poetic Feet and Meter,** or the rhythmic structure of the poem. The term **feet** refers to the pa ern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry, and the term **meter** refers to the configuration of poetic feet within a line. With a li le practice, you can learn to identify the feet and meter in any poem!

POETIC FEET

A single **poetic foot** contains a certain number of stressed and unstressed syllables. Common forms of poetic feet include:

- **Iambic:** unstressed/STRESSED, pronounced *duh-**DUH***

  Belong → *be-**LONG***

  Destroy → *de-**STROY***

  Portray → *por-**TRAY***

- **Trochaic:** STRESSED/unstressed, pronounced ***DUH**-duh*

  Garden →***GAR**-den*

  Market →***MAR**-ket*

Toothbrush →***TOOTH-****brush*

- **Anapestic:** unstressed/unstressed/STRESSED, pronounced *duh-duh-****DUH***

  Disregard → *dis-re-****GARD***

  Overcome → *ov-er-****COME***

  Understand → *un-der-****STAND***

- **Dactylic:** STRESSED/unstressed/unstressed, pronounced ***DUH-****duh-duh* Bu ermilk →***BUT-****ter-milk*

  Elephant →***EL-****le-phant*

  Handkerchief →***HAND-****ker-chief*

POETIC METER

Meter refers to the number of times that a poetic foot appears in a line of poetry. Common forms of meter include:

- **Monometer** contains one poetic foot. Due to its short length, you will rarely encounter this kind of meter.
- **Dimeter** contains two poetic feet. Here is an example of **iambic dimeter** from the first line of "We Are Seven" by William Wordsworth:

  A simple child
  a SIM-| ple CHILD
- **Trimeter** contains three poetic feet. Here is an example of **trochaic trimeter** from Percy Bysshe Shelley's "To a Skylark":

  Higher still and higher,

  HIGH-*er* |***STILL*** *and* |***HIGH-****er*

  From the earth thou springest

  FROM *the* |***EARTH*** *thou* |***SPRING-****est*
- **Tetrameter** contains four poetic feet. Here is an example of **anapestic tetrameter** from Lord Byron's "The Destruction of Sennacherib":

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,

*the as-**SYR-**| ian came **DOWN**| like a **WOLF**| on the **FOLD***

And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold *and*

*his **CO-**| horts were **GLEAM-**| ing in **PUR-**| ple and **GOLD***

- **Pentameter** contains five poetic feet. Here is an example of **iambic pentameter** from "The Waking" by Theodore Roethke:

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

*I **WAKE**| to **SLEEP**| and **TAKE**| my **WAK-**| ing **SLOW***

I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.

*I **FEEL**| my **FATE**| in **WHAT**| I **CAN-**| not **FEAR*** I learn by going where

I have to go.

*I **LEARN**| by **GO-**| ing **WHERE**| I **HAVE**| to **GO***

- **Hexameter** contains six poetic feet. Here is an example of **dactylic hexameter** from the first line of "Evangeline" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,

***THIS** is the |**FOR-**est pri-|**ME-**val the |**MUR-**mur-ing |**PINES** and the |**HEM-**locks*

- **Heptameter** contains seven poetic feet. Here is an example of **iambic heptameter** from Galadriel's Song of Eldamar from J.R.R. Tolkien's *Fellowship of the Ring*:

I sang of leaves, of leaves of gold, and leaves of gold there grew:

*I **SANG**| of **LEAVES**| of **LEAVES**| of **GOLD**|and **LEAVES**| of **GOLD**| there **GREW*** Of wind I sang, a wind there came, and in the branches blew.

*Of **WIND**| I **SANG**| a **WIND**| there **CAME**| and **IN**| the **BRANCH-**| es **BLEW***

- **Octameter** contains eight poetic feet. Here is an example of **trochaic octameter** from the first line of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven":

"Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,"

***ONCE** up-|**ON** a |**MID-**night |**DREA-**ry |**WHILE** I |**PON-**dered |**WEAK** and | **WEA-**ry*

What are Figures of Speech?

Figures of speech are an integral part of any language, which are used extensively not only in our day-to-day speech but also in written texts and oral literature. These are a word or a phrase used in a distinctive way to produce a rhetorical effect. To say in very simple terms, it is a phrase whose actual meaning is different from its literal meaning. These are developed and expressed through a variety of different rhetorical techniques. All of us use different figures of speech in our daily conversations, both deliberately and

subconsciously.

Types of Figures of Speech

There is a wide range of different types of figures of speech that are used in our daily communication. Let us take a look at some of the most popular ones that are usedextensively:

Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two things that are different from each other but have similar qualities. These are generally formed through the usage of the words 'as' or 'like'. Some examples of similes in a sentence include:

- He is as brave as a lion.
- Her expression was as cold as ice.
- Swim like a fish.
- As light as a feather.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech that is used for implying a comparison between two things that have something in common but are in general different from each other.
Some examples of the usage of metaphors in a sentence is as follows:

- It is raining cats and dogs.
- He is the star of our class.
- Life is a highway.
- Her eyes were diamonds.

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech that attributes human nature or human qualities to abstract or inanimate objects. For example, we often use the phrases like the howling wind, dancing leaves, time flies, etc. Some examples of personification in a sentence are:

- The opportunity knocked at his door
- The plants in her house silently begged to be watered
- Lightning danced across the sky
- The wind howled in the night.

Alliteration

Alliteration is a type of figure of speech in which a sentence consists of a series of words that have the same consonant sound at the beginning. Some popular examples of alliteration in a sentence include:

- She sells seashells on the seashore
- A good cook could cook as many cookies as a good cook who could cook cookies
- All Adam ate in August was apples and almonds
- Barry bought a book to bring to the backyard barbecue

Onomatopoeia

This a figure of speech that is used to express a sound. To be more precise, it involves the use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the action or object referred to i.e. hiss, clap, etc. Some examples of onomatopoeia include:

- The buzzing bee flew over my head
- The stone hit the water with a splash
- The boulder hit the ground with a flump.
- Leaves rustle in the wind and are whipped into the air.

Hyperbole

A hyperbole is a figure of speech that consists of an exaggeration. It is the usage of exaggerated terms in order to emphasize or heighten the effect of something. Some examples of using hyperboles in a sentence include:

- I have told you a million times to not touch my stuff!
- She has got a pea-sized brain
- I'm so hungry I could eat a horse.
- She's as old as the hills.

Euphemism

Euphemism is the usage of a mild word in substitution of something that is more explicit or harsh when referring to something unfavorable or unpleasant. Some examples of the usage of this figure of speech include:

- This mall has good facilities for differently-abled people
- He passed away in his sleep
- Passed away" instead of "died"
- "Let go" instead of "fired"

Irony

Irony or sarcasm is a figure of speech in which the usage of words conveys the opposite of their literal meaning. These are often used in a humorous manner. Some examples of irony include:

- Your hands are as clean as mud
- The dinner you served was as hot as ice
- Coming home to a big mess and saying, "it's great to be back"
- Telling a rude customer to "have a nice day"

Anaphora

It is a repetition of a word or phrase at the start of several sentences of clauses. Some of the examples of anaphora figures of speech are as follows:

- **Dr. Martin Luther King** Jr.: "I Have a Dream" Speech
- Charles Dickens: A Tale of Two Cities
- "Be bold. Be brief. Be gone."
- "Get busy living or get busy dying."

Apostrophe

An apostrophe is a figure of speech. It addresses the subject that is not present in the work. In this case, the object is absent or inanimate. Here are some of the examples of apostrophes.

- Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are
- Welcome, O life!
- Alarm clock, please don't fail me.
- Seven, you are my lucky number!

Pun

Puns are among the most frequently used figures of speech in daily conversation. They may be great conversation starters since they make you sound clever and occasionally even humorous.

- Denial is a river in Egypt (referring to The Nile using the word Denial).
- Her cat is near the computer to keep an eye on the mouse.
- No matter how much you push the envelope, it will still be stationery.
- Everyone thinks my runny nose is funny, but it's snot.

Paradox

These figures of speech, like ironies, emphasize something by discussing the exact opposite of it. A paradox, on the other hand, differs from irony in that it does not make the contrast as evident.

- "Some of my biggest triumphs have also been failures," (According to US actress Pearl Bailey)
- "War is good. Slavery is freedom. "Ignorance is power," (As said by English author George Orwell)
- Save money by spending it
- If I know one thing, it's that I know nothing

Oxymoron

This figure of speech, which should not be confused with ironies and paradoxes, links two opposing ideas at once. This indicates that two opposing concepts are utilized inside a single sentence to create levity in an oxymoron figure of speech.

- This is another fine mess you have got us into
- Suddenly the room filled with a deafening silence

- The comedian was seriously funny
- You are clearly confused by the situation you have found yourself in

Assonance

Internal vowels in nearby words that are the same or comparable in sound. Here are a few **examples** of assonance in speech:

- How now, brown cow?
- The light of the fire is a sight
- Go slow over the road
- Try as I might, the kite did not fly

Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech when one term or phrase is used in place of another with which it is closely related. It is also a rhetorical technique used to describe something indirectly by making references to objects around it.

- "That stuffed suit with the briefcase is a poor excuse for a salesman," the manager said angrily.
- The pen is mightier than the sword"
- I'm a Silicon Valley guy. I just think people from Silicon Valley can do anything.
- Most of the successful people in Hollywood are failures as human beings

FORMS OF POETRY

LYRICS

Lyric is a collection of verses and choruses, making up a complete song, or a short and nonnarrative poem. A lyric uses a single speaker, who expresses personal emotions or thoughts. Lyrical poems, which are often popular for their musical quality and rhythm, are pleasing to the ear, and are easily put to music.

The term *lyric* originates from the Greek word "*lyre*," which is an instrument used by the Grecians to play when reading a poem. Lyrical poets demonstrate specific moods and emotions through words. Such moods express a range of emotions, from extreme to nebulous, about life, love, death, or other experiences of life.

Types of Lyrics

There are several types of lyric used in poems such as given below:

Sonnet- A sonnet uses fourteen lines, and follows iambic pentameter with five pairs of accented and unaccented syllables. The structure of a sonnet, with predetermined syllables and

rhyme scheme, makes it flow off the tongues of readers in way similar way to a on song on the radio.

Elegy- An elegy is a mournful, sad, or melancholic poem or a song that expresses sorrow for someone who has been lost, or died. Originally, it followed a structure using a meter alternating six foot and five foot lines. However, modern elegies do not follow such a pattern, though the mood of the poem remains the same.

Ode- An ode is a lyric poem that expresses intense feelings, such as love, respect, or praise for someone or something. Like an elegy, an ode does not follow any strict format or structure, though it uses refrains or repeated lines. It is usually longer than other lyrical forms, and focuses on positive moods of life.

Dramatic Monologue-A dramatic monologue has theatrical quality, which means that the poem portrays a solitary speaker communing with the audience, without any dialogue coming from other characters. Usually, the speaker talks to a specific person in the poem.

Occasional Poetry-Poets write *occasional* poetry for specific *occasions* such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, victories, and dedications, such as John Dryden's "Annus Mirabilis," and Edmund Spencer's "Epithalamion."

SONNET

The word *sonnet* is derived from the Italian word "sonetto," which means a "little song" or small lyric. In poetry, a sonnet has 14 lines, and is written in iambic pentameter. Each line has 10 syllables. It has specific rhyme scheme, and a *Volta*, or a specific turn. Generally, sonnets are divided into different groups based on the rhyme scheme they follow. The rhymes of a sonnet are arranged according to a certain rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in English is usually abab–cdcd–efef–gg, and in Italian abba–abba–cde–cde.

Types Of Sonnets

Sonnets can be categorized into six major types:

1. Italian Sonnet
2. Shakespearean Sonnet
3. Spenserian Sonnet
4. Miltonic Sonnet
5. Terza Rima Sonnet
6. Curtal Sonnet

Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet- Italian or Petrarchan sonnet was introduced by 14th century Italian poet Francesco Petrarch. 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.

Shakespearean Sonnet- A Shakespearean sonnet is generally written in iambic pentameter, in which there are 10 syllables in each line. The rhyme scheme of the Shakespearian sonnet is abab–cdcd–efef–gg, which is difficult to follow.

Spenserian Sonnet- Sir Edmund Spenser was the first poet who modified the Petrarch's form, and introduced a new rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in this sonnet is abab–bcbc–cdcd–ee, which is specific to Spenser, and such types of sonnets are called Spenserian sonnets.

Function of Sonnet- The sonnet has become popular among different poets because it has a great adaptability to different purposes and requirements. Rhythms are strictly followed. It could be a perfect poetic style for elaboration or expression of a single feeling or thought, with its short length in iambic pentameter. In fact, it gives an ideal setting for a poet to explore strong emotions. Due to its short length, it is easy for both the writer and the reader to manage.

ELEGY

Elegy is a form of literature that can be defined as a poem or song in the form of elegiac couplets, written in honor of someone deceased. It typically laments or mourns the death of the individual. Elegy is derived from the Greek work *elegus*, which means a song of bereavement sung along with a flute. The forms of elegy we see today were introduced in the 16th century. *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, by Thomas Gray, and *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, by Walt Whitman are the two most popular examples of elegy.

Features of Elegy

Usually, elegies are identified by several characteristics of genre:

- Just like a classical epic, an elegy typically starts with the invocation of the muse, and then proceeds by referencing traditional mythology.
- It often involves a poet who knows how to phrase thoughts imaginatively in the first person.
- Questions are raised by the poet about destiny, justice, and fate.
- The poet associates the events of the deceased with events in his own life by drawing a subtle comparison.
- This kind of digression gives the poet space to go beyond the main or crude subject to a deeper level where the connotations might be metaphorical.
- Towards the end the poet generally tries to provide comfort to ease the pain of the situation. Christian elegies usually proceed from sorrow and misery, to hope and happiness because they say that death is just a hindrance in the way of passing from the mortal state into the eternal state.
- An elegy is not always based on a plot.

Function of Elegy

- Elegy is one of the richest literary forms because it has the capacity to express emotions that deeply influence people. The strongest of the tools elegy uses is its reliance on memories of those who are no more. Most of the poets who wrote elegies were evidently awed by the frailty of human beings, and how the world completely forgets about the deceased at some point.
- However, the function of elegy is not as limited as it is thought. Whenever we take a look at elegy examples, what comes to mind are feelings like sorrow, grief, and lamentation; but, a study of the Latin elegy tells us otherwise. A great deal of genre created in western literature was inspired by Latin elegy, which was not always so somber. The most famous elegiac poets in Latin literature, such as *Catullus, Ovid,* and *Propertius*, used humor, irony, even slotted narratives into a poem and still called them elegy.

ODE

An ode is a form of poetry such as sonnet or elegy. Ode is a literary technique that is lyrical in nature, but not very lengthy. You have often read odes in which poets praise people, natural scenes, and abstract ideas. Ode is derived from a Greek word *aeidein*, which means to chant or sing. It is highly solemn and serious in its tone and subject matter, and usually is used with elaborate patterns of stanzas. However, the tone is often formal. A salient feature of ode is its uniform metrical feet, but poets generally do not strictly follow this rule though use highly elevated theme.

Types of Odes

Odes are of three types, including (1) Pindar ode, (2) Horatian ode, and (3) irregular ode. Pindar Ode- This ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who began writing choral poems that were meant to be sung at public events. It contains three triads; strophe, antistrophe, and final stanza as epode, with irregular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines.

Horatian Ode- The name of this ode was taken from the Latin poet, Horace. Unlike heroic odes of Pindar, Horatian ode is informal, meditative and intimate. These odes dwelled upon interesting subject matters that were simple and were pleasing to the senses. Since Horatian odes are informal in tone, they are devoid of any strict rules.

Irregular Ode- This type of ode is without any formal rhyme scheme, and structure such as the Pindaric ode. Hence, the poet has great freedom and flexibility to try any types of concepts and moods. William Wordsworth and John Keats were such poets who extensively wrote irregular odes, taking advantage of this form.

Function of Ode- Ode is a form of lyrical poetry, in which poets use a certain metrical pattern and rhyme scheme to express their noble and lofty sentiments in serious and sometimes satirical tone. Since the themes of odes are inspiring and lofty, they have universal appeal. Also, by using sublime and exceptional style, poets endeavor to compose grand and elevated types of odes. Sometimes odes may be humorous, but they are always thoughtful, intended to explore important themes and observations related to human relations, emotions and senses.

Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic monologue means self-conversation, speech or talks which includes interlocutor presented dramatically. It means a person who is speaking to himself or someone else speaks to reveal specific intentions of his actions. However, in literature, it is a poetic form or a poem that presents the speech or conversation of a person in a dramatic manner.

Features of a Dramatic Monologue

A dramatic monologue has these common features in them.

1. A single person delivering a speech on one aspect of his life
2. The audience may or may not be present
3. Speaker reveals his temperament and character only through his speech

Types of Dramatic Monologue

There are three major types of dramatic monologues such as:

1. Romantic monologue
2. Philosophical and psychological monologue
3. Conversational monologue

Function of Dramatic Monologue: A monologue functions as a tool to give vent to one's thoughts. It provides an opportunity for the poets to use powerful words spoken through their characters. So, the characters can express themselves or their ideas without an obstacle or hindrance. A dramatic monologue is also a convenient device to present different characters and their inner thoughts through verses.

IDYLL

An idyll is a short pastoral poem that evokes rural life. Writers may have experience with the subject matter themselves or be considering what it would be like to live that kind of life. The Idyll The Idyll derives its name from a Greek word meaning 'a Little form' or 'a little picture'. The poet presents a picture in a few words or series of pictures composing a longer poem. The pictorial effect is achieved by graphic description as colour is used in a painting. The Idyll gives a vivid visual description of an idealized or serene environment. It often creates an impression of beauty, simplicity and harmony in nature and presents rural life in an idealized manner.

In visual art, an idyll works in a similar way. It is used to describe pastoral paintings that depict the same sort of rural subject matter. Often, this includes peasants and laborers. This kind of painting dates back to the early 15th century but it didn't become widely popular until centuries later. One good example is The Shepherdess by William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1889). It is one of several paintings he completed of similar women.

The Pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil may be considered Idylls. Other examples include Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 'The Village Blacksmith' (1840), Alfred Tennyson's 'English Idylls and Other Poems'(1874) and Robert Browning's 'Dramatic Idylls'(1879).

Most idylls are concerned with intimate moments in small communities of farmers and laborers. These poems might describe the tasks a single person completes in a day or focus on one such task, such as caring for farm animals, walking in a field, or getting water from a well. These poems are written in the style of or were inspired by Theocritus' Idylls. He was a Greek poet who died in 260 BC and is regarded as the creator of the pastoral poem. There is little known about the poet besides what can be ascertained or inferred from his writing. In the first Idyll Theocritus wrote, he describes Thyrsis singing to a goatherd about Daphnis. Several other divine figures come into the poem to speak to Thyrsis about his love. Various poets from Greece, Rome, and beyond took up similar forms of poetry. This includes writers like Virgil and Catullus.

Idylls of the King by Alfred Lord Tennyson

'Idylls of the King' was published between 1859 and 1885. It is a series of twelve poems by Tennyson that retell the story of King Arthur. They detail popular characters like Guinevere and King Arthur's knights. Broadly, the group of poems describes Arthur's attempts to create

an idealized kingdom. He eventually fails, but the story is a multilayered and engaging one. Here is a quote from the 12-poem cycle:

I found Him in the shining of the stars,

I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,

But in His ways with men I find Him not.

I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.

O me! for why is all around us here

As if some lesser god had made the world,

But had not force to shape it as he would,

Till the High God behold it from beyond,

And enter it, and make it beautiful?

Lycidas by John Milton

'Lycidas' is a famous idyll by John Milton. In it, Milton alludes to the works of Theocritus. He evokes the muses in the first lines, something the Greek poet often did. Within the poem, Milton tells the story of the death of Lycidas, a character from Theocritus' idylls, as described above. Here are a few lines from the beginning of the poem:

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more

Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,

And with forc'd fingers rude

Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.

Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear

Compels me to disturb your season due;

This poem was first published in 1638 in Justa Edouardo King Naufrago, a collection dedicated to one of Milton's close friends who passed away. It is a total of 193 lines in length and does not follow a consistent rhyme scheme. The entire work is written in blank verse and utilizes elements from epics and elegies. Sometimes, scholars and readers interpret this work as an

allegory, representing Britain during the mid-19th century. These poems are written in blank verse or unrhymed iambic pentameter.

EPIC

The word epic is derived from the Ancient Greek adjective, *"epikos"*, which means a poetic story. In literature, an epic is a long narrative poem, which is usually related to heroic deeds of a person of an unusual courage and unparalleled bravery. In order to depict this bravery and courage, the epic uses grandiose style.

The hero is usually the representative of the values of a certain culture, race, nation or a religious group on whose victor of failure the destiny of the whole nation or group depends. Therefore, certain supernatural forces, deus ex machina, help the hero, who comes out victor at the end. An epic usually starts with an invocation to muse, but then picks up the threads of the story from the middle and moves on to the end.

An epic is a long narrative poem that tells the story of heroic deeds, normally accomplished by more-than-human characters. E.g. This ancient epic poem tells the story of a heroic journey and contains themes of courage and loyalty.

Whether male or female, the men, and women in these poems are the best humanity offers. They show extreme courage and outshine their contemporaries in their bravery. A character has to be large, mentally, and spiritually large enough to be the subject of an epic poem.

Epic poems are the product of preliterate societies or those in which reading and writing are uncommon. Writing might've been part of society, but not to the extent it is today. Therefore, stories were told orally, passed down from person to person, and embellished and changed as they travelled. Scholars believe that Homeric epics, like the Odyssey, were originally oral in nature. Epic poems are also considered to be the first form of poetry.

The Characters in Epic Poetry

When considering epic poetry, more than likely, your thoughts immediately go to the two works attributed to Homer, *the Iliad,* and *the Odyssey*. The main characters of these works– Odysseus, Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon, Priam, Helen– are all heads above other men and women of their time for their bravery, and of course, in Helen's case, for her beauty.

Aside from their courage and beauty, these characters are more often than not representatives of some set of values. These could belong to an entire region or a small group of people. There is a lot hinging on the plotlines of those in epic poems. Take, for example, Gilgamesh from the oldest recorded epic, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. (Written in Mesopotamia in 1800 BC). He is the king of the Uruk and is commonly recognized as an actual historical figure.

But, in the epic, he takes on a larger-than-life presence. He battles with a rival, Enkidu, and eventually embarks on a journey to find the secret of eternal life. The form of the epic plays straight into the major themes of the Epic of Gilgamesh as it is through this poem that the ancient king found eternal life. His story, in what is undoubtedly an exaggerated form, is still told almost 4,000 years after it was written.

The Form of Epic Poetry

Just as the characters in epic poetry have to be grand enough to stand up to the form, so too does the form have to do justice to the character. The verse is normally elaborate and therefore able to exaggerate the already otherworldly qualities of the characters of an epic.

Almost every epic in the Western literary canon makes use of a dactylic hexameter. This pattern is also referred to as a heroic hexameter. This metrical pattern can be seen in Virgil's Aeneid as well as Ovid's Metamorphosis and Homer's Iliad, about the siege of Troy, and Odyssey. Each line of these long narrative poems, ideally, if the poet stuck to the pattern 100% of the time, is made up of six feet. These feet would consist of one long and two short beats, or one stressed and two unstressed. But, poets often use spondees rather than dactyls, two stressed syllables followed by one unstressed. Enjambment and caesura are also common features.

Epic poems are also noted for their length. The longest ever written was the Indian *Mahabharata.* It was 200,000 lines of verse as well as some lengthy prose passages. Shorter but still considerable are *The Odyssey* with 12,110 lines and Dante's *The Divine Comedy* with 14,233 lines. The latter is separated into three distinct sections and describes the poet's journey through Inferno (Hell), Purgatorio (Purgatory), and Paradiso (Paradise/Heaven). Another example is Lord Byron's 'Don Juan.

Supernatural Forces in Epic Poetry

The heroes in epic poetry are often assisted or stymied by known or unknown supernatural forces. This is a literary technique known as dues ex machina. It refers to the intervention of a god or more than a natural force into a narrative. This technique is usually applied in order to push the story towards a certain conclusion or change up what could be a predictable series of events. The most obvious examples come from the Iliad, in which the two sides, the Greeks, or Achaeans, and the Trojans, are assisted to different agrees by different Gods in the Greek Pantheon.

Take, for example, the relationship that Athena, the goddess of Wisdom, has with the Achaeans. She fights on their side partly because of her love and appreciation for Menelaus, a commander of the Greek army, husband to Helen, and brother to Agamemnon, but also because of her anger at Paris and Helen, who started the war.

The gods appear in this epic poem in the same way humans do. They can fight physically alongside them, but they can also control the elements and influence the outcome of events. The supernatural can also be seen in The Faerie Queene by Edmund Spenser and Beowulf.

Examples of Epic Poetry

Paradise Lost by John Milton

One of the most widely read epics today, Paradise Lost, tells the story of Satan's fall from Heaven, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and Satan's attempts to fight a war against the angels remaining in Heaven. Here is a quote:

Me miserable! Which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep,
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.

The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

As mentioned above, The Divine Comedy is an epic that details the poet's journey through the various stages of the afterlife. He's led on this journey by Virgil, the poet responsible for the epic poem (that continues the story of the Trojans after the conclusion of the Iliad), the Aeneid. Here is a quote: The man who lies asleep will never waken fame, and his desire and all his life drift past him like a dream, and the traces of his memory fade from time like smoke in air, or ripples on a stream.

The Metamorphoses by Ovid

Ovid's most famous and lasting work, The Metamorphoses, was written in 8 AD. It is made up of 11,995 lines and spans 15 books. It is usually considered an epic, but there are such a variety of themes and tones tapped into within the poem that it is sometimes classified into other genres. The verse tells around 250 individual stories within its lines. Altogether, they depict the story of the world's creation to the birth of Julius Caesar. Here is a quote:

As wave is driven by wave
And each, pursued, pursues the wave ahead,
So time flies on and follows, flies, and follows,
Always, for ever and new. What was before
Is left behind; what never was is now;
And every passing moment is renewed.

Function of Epic

As the epic poem is the earliest form of poetry, it is the earliest form of entertainment as well. Epics were written to commemorate the struggles and adventures of kings and warriors. The main function of epic poetry was to elevate the status of the hero among the audiences to inspire them to be ready to perform heroic actions. Epic obtained most of its themes from the exploits performed by legendary characters and their illustrious ancestors. That is why these exploits became examples for others to follow, and still lived in books. It is through epics, models of ideal heroic behavior were supplied to the common people. Moreover, epics also were collections of historical events not recorded in common history books — the reason that they are read today to be enjoyed and be informed regarding the past.

BALLAD

A **ballad** is a type of poem that is sometimes set to music. Ballads have a long history and are found in many cultures. The ballad actually began as a folk song and continues today in popular music. Many love songs today can be considered ballads.

A typical ballad consists of stanzas that contain a **quatrain**, or four poetic lines. The **meter** or rhythm of each line is usually **iambic**, which means it has one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. In ballads, there are usually eight or six syllables in a line. Like any poem, some ballads follow this form and some don't, but almost all ballads are **narrative**, which means they tell a story. Because the ballad was originally set to music, some ballads have a **refrain**, or a repeated chorus, just like a song does. Similarly, the rhyme scheme is often ABAB because of the musical quality of this rhyme pattern.

While ballads have always been popular, it was during the **Romantic movement** of poetry in the late 18th century that the ballad had a resurgence and became a popular form. Many famous romantic poets, like William Wordsworth, wrote in the ballad form.

One famous ballad is ***The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*** by English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was written in 1797 and is the story of a sailor who has returned from a long voyage.

A ballad is a kind of verse, sometimes narrative in nature, often set to music and developed from 14th and 15th-century minstrelsy. E.g. The ballad echoed through the ancient halls, telling a tale of love and loss with haunting melodies and lyrics that transported listeners to a bygone era.

Ballads developed from 14th and 15th-century minstrelsy. The minstrel, a kind of performer in Medieval Europe, could be a musician, acrobat, singer or any other type of conceivable performer. As the decades and centuries progressed, the word "minstrel" narrowed to mean someone who sang songs and/or played musical instruments. The connection to the ballad is clear when one considers the fact that minstrels usually performed songs that related stories of distant places or historical events. These were more often than not imagined, and created from the minstrel's own imaginations.

While there are a number of variations, traditionally a ballad consists of thirteen lines with a varying rhyme scheme. Sometimes they followed the pattern, ABABBCBC with 14 syllables lines. Other times the pattern ABCB or ABAB repeated and the lines alternated between eight and six syllables.

Due to the fact that ballads were first conceived of as performance songs, couplets were a popular way to structure the lines. A couplet consists of two lines of poetry usually of the same length, that rhyme. But, as the ballad grew more popular and more poets, songwriters, and composers chose to make use of its form the structure evolved. Now, because of the endless variation used by writers in the past and the present, it is difficult to strictly define what about it is and what it isn't.

What are the ballad forms?

Since the ballad form was first conceived, the word has had a number of different meanings. At one time, during the 18th century, the form was used for broadsides. A broadside was a

single sheet of paper, usually inexpensive, that shared news, illustrations, rhymes, and of course, ballads. They were most popular between the 16th and 19th centuries. This was particularly true in Britain, Ireland, and North America. Since then, they have become intrinsically linked to the ballad form. This is only one kind of ballad though, the form split off into two other distinct forms.

Nowadays, lovers of poetry are most familiar with literary or lyrical ballads. These are in contrast with traditional ballads, those which came from the minstrels of medieval Europe, and broadside ballads, which are sometimes thought to be vulgar or for the common people. When it comes to lyrical ballads, the best-known names include Robert Burns, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Oscar Wilde. These writers all contributed some of the best known, and widely respected ballads in the English language.

Let's take Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* as an example. This piece was written in 1897 while Wilde was in exile. He had been imprisoned in Reading Goal for gross indecency for the previous two years. His years of confinement inspired him to speak about prison life and the different ways in which men deal with love and death. There is a narrative to this piece as well. The poem tells the story of Charles Thomas Wooldridge who murdered his wife. He had been sentenced to hang, but while in prison went about his life wistfully.

The speaker, who is generally considered to be the poet, as well as the other prisoners, felt jealousy over this man's attitude and the fact that he has accepted his fate. Charles Thomas Wooldridge is hanged in the second section of the poem and he meets his death bravely while the other men cower. Throughout the rest of the lines, Wilde speaks about the justice system and comes to the conclusion that one must be close to God in order to find happiness. Here is one excerpt from the text which includes the refrain line "each man kills the thing he loves".

> Yet each man kills the thing he loves
>
> By each let this be heard,
>
> Some do it with a bitter look,
>
> Some with a flattering word,
>
> The coward does it with a kiss,
>
> The brave man with a sword!

In these lines, Wilde uses the refrain in order to bring the reader back around to the major cyclical theme. That, no matter who one is or what they think of themselves, they will eventually kill what they love. They will destroy it in any number of ways.

What are the major themes of ballads?

Narrative is one of the most important features of a ballad. Scholars believe that the narrative poem and song originated from Germanic traditions of storytelling such as that seen in 'Beowulf'. The earliest example of a ballad form in England is 'Judas' which is included in a

13th-century manuscript. It tells the story of Christ giving Judas 30 pieces of silver to buy food for the apostles. But, when Judas is on his way to the market, he is intercepted by his sister who steals his money. This leads to the pivotal moment in which Judas cells Christ to the Romans for the same number of silver pieces. In other poems, the ballad story relies greatly on imagery which can range from the tragic to the historical to the comedic.

When did ballads become popular?
Ballads reached the height of their popularity from the late Medieval period until the 19th century. Since then, the world ballad has come to mean something else entirely, at least to the general public. The word is connected to a sentimental, usually slow and emotional love song. This kind of song became popular in the 1960s and '70s.

Do poets still write ballads today?
Yes, of course! Today, when it comes to music, ballads are everywhere. But, they are rarer than they were in the mid to late 1900s.

What about poetic ballads?
Yes, those are still around too. Check out this list of modern and more traditional ballads.

'The Second Coming' by William Butler Yeats
'Betrothal' by Carol Ann Duffy
'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge
'The Lady of Shalott' by Alfred Lord Tennyson
'A Ballad of Two Knights' by Sara Teasdale
'The Ballad of Emmet Till' by Sylvia Plath