

# Poetic Devices

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# Pastoral



**Definition:** A poem that depicts rural life in a peaceful, idealized way for example of shepherds or country life. Essentially it pertains to the country or to life in the country; rural; rustic.

## Example:

When spring begins and the ice-locked streams begin To flow down from  
the snowy hills above And the clods begin to crumble in the breeze, The  
time has come for my groaning ox to drag My heavy plow across the  
fields, so that The plow blade shines as the furrow rubs against it. Not  
till the earth has been twice plowed, so twice Exposed to sun and twice  
to coolness will It yield what the farmer prays for; then will the barn  
Be full to bursting with the gathered grain, And yet if the field's  
unknown and new to us, Before our plow breaks open the soil at all,  
It's necessary to study the ways of the winds And the changing ways of  
the skies, and also to know The history of the planting in that ground,  
What crops will prosper there and what will not. In one place grain  
grows best, in another, vines; Another's good for the cultivation of  
trees; In still another the grain turns green unbidden.

*Written by: Virgil ( First Georgic)*



# Example

## The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow rivers to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses  
And a thousand fragrant poises,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs;  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing,  
For thy delight each May morning:  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my love.

*by Christopher Marlowe*



# Ode

**Definition:** A lyric poem that is used to praise someone or something. The word “ode” comes from a Greek word meaning “to sing or chant.”

Some examples;

- Ode to autumn
- Ode to my brother
- Ode to Christmas





# Example

## An Ode to Spring

Spring appears in whispers and  
hushed tones,  
As the bellowing winter bows away.  
Drowsy flowers come to attention,  
Waking from their sleep-  
Yawning;  
With heads turned upward towards  
The Maestro called sun-  
I watch with anticipation  
As...  
The concert begins.





# Epic

**Definition:** An epic poem is a long poem with multiple stanzas about an important person or event. Usually these poems have a protagonist. They are narrative and are usually written in lyric or verse form.

## The Divine Comedy

“In the middle of the journey of our life, I came to myself, in a dark wood, where the direct way was lost. It is a hard thing to speak of, how wild, harsh and impenetrable that wood was, so that thinking of it recreates the fear. It is scarcely less bitter than death: but, in order to tell of the good that I found there, I must tell of the other things I saw there”

*by Dante*



# Example

Here is a portion of the Epic Poem,

## Beowulf

“Hrothgar, king of the Danes, or Scyldings, builds great mead-hall, or palace, in which he hopes to feast his liegemen and to give them presents. The joy of king and retainers is, however, of short duration. Grendel, the monster, is seized with hateful jealousy. He cannot brook the sounds of joyance that reach him down in his fen-dwelling near the hall. Oft and anon he goes to the joyous building, bent on direful mischief. Thane after thane is ruthlessly carried off and devoured, while no one is found strong enough and bold enough to cope with the monster. For twelve years he persecutes Hrothgar and his vassals.” (*Cont...*)

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16328/16328-h/16328-h.htm>

# Dramatic Monologue

**Definition:** A poem written as a speech or a narrative, revealing key qualities about the speaker/character, while describing the story line.





# Example

## Romeo and Juliet

Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?  
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy  
name  
When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?  
But wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my  
cousin?  
That villain cousin would have killed my  
husband.  
Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring!  
Your tributary drops belong to woe,  
Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.  
My husband lives, that Tybalt would have  
slain;  
And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my  
husband.  
All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?  
Some word there was, worsè than Tybalt's  
death,  
That murd'èred me. I would forget it fain;  
But O, it presses to my memory  
Like damnèd guilty deeds to sinners' minds!  
'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo--banishèd!'  
That 'banishèd,' that one word 'banishèd,'  
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's  
death

Was woe enough, if it had ended there;  
Or, if sour woe delights in fellowship  
And needly will be ranked with other  
griefs,  
Why followèd not, when she said 'Tybalt's  
dead,'  
Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,  
Which modern lamentation might have  
moved?  
But with a rearward following Tybalt's  
death,  
'Romeo is banishèd'--to speak that word  
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,  
All slain, all dead. 'Romeo is banishèd'--  
There is no end, no limit, measure,  
bound,  
In that word's death; no words can that  
woe sound.

*by William Shakespeare*



# Free Verse

**Definition:** A poem with no rhyme scheme or specific meter.

## Washed Away

Nothing's changed except me and the facts  
And the sadness I didn't mean to start.  
But it feels different now you've said  
It's wrong, and I still can't see your point.  
And I think as water runs over my hands that  
That's really all there is or can be.  
The gold is wearing off the infamous ring  
And something wears away from around my heart.

*by Katherine Foreman*



# Ballad

**Definition:** A poem or song narrating a story in short stanzas. Traditional ballads are typically of unknown authorship, having been passed on orally from one generation to the next.

Some of the most famous ballads are sung by the Righteous Brothers, Elvis Presley, Lonestar, Frank Sinatra, and Peter Gabriel.





# Example

## Ballata 5

"That which befalls me in my Lady's  
presence/Bar explanation intellectual./I seem  
to see a lady wonderful/Spring forth between  
her lips, one whom no sense/Can fully tell the  
mind of, and one whence/Another, in beauty,  
springeth marvelous,/From whom a star goes  
forth and speaketh thus:/'Now my salvation is  
gone forth from thee.'"

*by Guido Cavalcanti*



# Ballad Stanza

**Definition:** A four-line stanza consisting of unrhymed first and third lines in iambic tetrameter and rhymed second and fourth lines in iambic trimeter, often used in ballads.

## Examples

### Barbara Allen

Oh, I forbid ye maidens all  
That wear gold in your **hair**  
To come or go by Carterhaugh  
For young Tam Lin is **there**.

In Scarlet Town, where I was born  
There lived a fair maid **dwellin'**;  
Made many a youth cry well-a-day,  
And her name was Barbara **Allen**.

*-Author unknown*

### A Poem is a Little Path

A poem is a little path  
That leads you through the **trees**.  
It takes you to the cliffs and shores,  
To anywhere you **please**.

Follow it and trust your way  
With mind and heart as **one**,  
And when the journey's over,  
You'll find you've just **begun**.

*-Author unknown*



# Lyric Poetry

**Definition:** Personal, reflective poetry that expresses the speaker's emotions or thoughts on a subject.

**Example:**

## Annabel Lee

It was many and many a year ago,  
In a kingdom by the sea,  
That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
By the name of Annabel Lee;  
And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
Than to love and be loved by me.

*by Edgar Allan Poe*



# Elegy

**Definition:** A formal poem that reflects on death or another solemn theme.

## Requiem

Under the wide and starry  
sky  
Dig the grave and let me lie:  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a  
will.

This be the verse you 'grave  
for me:  
Here he lies where he long'd  
to be;  
Home is the sailor, home from  
the sea,  
And the hunter home from  
the hill

*-by Robert Louis Stevenson*

## Title Unknown

I have not lost my rings, my  
purse,  
My gold, my  
gems-my loss is worse,  
One that the stoutest heart  
must move.  
My pet, my joy, my  
little love,  
My tiny kitten, my Belaud,  
I lost, alas, three days ago.

*-by Joachim Du Bellay's*



# Narrative Poetry

**Definition:** A poem that tells a story, usually written in metred verse. Some poems may be short or long and the story it relates to may be complex, dramatic, with objectives, diverse characters, and metre.

Includes:

- Epics
- Ballads
- Idylls
- Lays



# Example

## Agincourt

*by Michael Drayton*

Fair stood the wind for France  
When we our sails advance,  
Nor now to prove our chance  
Longer will tarry;  
But putting to the main,  
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,  
With all his martial train  
Landed King Harry.

*(Cont.)* <http://www.blackcatpoems.com/d/agincourt.html#Oipbc1kLOsyjULMP.99>



# Sonnet

**Definition:** A poem consisting of fourteen lines divided into three quatrains with a concluding couplet, in English typically having ten syllables per line.





# Example

## A Toast to Toast

Of all the snacks that beckon in the  
night

When tummies growl and gnawing  
hunger calls,

But one can satisfy my famished  
plight

And summons me to stumble through  
the halls.

Oh piece of bread, so humble in your  
slice

What magic turns your skin from  
white to brown?

What arrogant aromas do entice

When toaster pops and butter coats  
you down!

With cinnamon and sugar or with  
jam

I dress you in the ornaments of sweet  
More sated, I, than proverb's happy  
clam

When crispy, hot and warm my lips  
you meet.

Of every night-time treat you are  
the most

I honor you, great food, whose  
name is toast.

*-by Gideon O. Burton*



# Satire

**Definition:** the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or mockery to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.

**Example:**





# Example

## The General

Good-morning; good-morning!' the General said  
When we met him last week on our way to the line.  
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,  
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.

'He's a cheery old card,' grunted Harry to Jack  
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.

•••••

But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

*by Siegfried Sassoon*



# Parody

**Definition:** An imitation of the style of a particular writer, artist, or genre with deliberate exaggeration for comic effect.

Many famous parody's are used in the media, books, or in music, such as;

- Vampires Suck, mocking twilight
- Weird Al



# Examples

## Mary had a Porcupine

Mary had a porcupine  
Its spines were sharp as knives  
And everywhere that Mary went  
Kids ran for their lives

It followed her to school one day  
She didn't pay attention  
All her classmates ran away  
And Mary got detention

*by Jon A Cavanaugh*

Video Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EB18wIIvuV8>