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[illegible]



humorous, nursery rhyme tone. Limericks are also found in a lot of traditional folk songs from the British Isles. Here's a classic example from the father of the limerick, Edward Lear. There was an Old Man with a beard, Who said, It is just as I feared! Two Owls and a Hen, Four Larks and a Wren, Have all built their nests in my beard! Epigrams are not always poems, but they often are. An epigram is a clever, witty, wise, or amusing remark delivered in an often satirical way. There are a few famous examples of epigrams: I did attend the funeral, but I sent a nice message that I approved of it. - Mark Twain. I ventured to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman. Virginia Woolf Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one. Marcus Aurelius We must all either wear out or rust out, every one of us. My choice is to wear out. Theodore Roosevelt This is not your responsibility but it is your problem. Cheryl Strayed If you see fraud and do not say fraud, you are a fraud. Nicholas Nassim Taleb Many of us are used to hearing ballads in the form of music, but that not always how they're presented. A ballad is a way of telling a story through poetry. Its an ancient form of poem that was traditionally passed down from generation to generation, often orally. Ballads are typically written in quatrains (four-line groups); however, there are plenty of examples that deviate from this structure. The rhyming scheme is ABCB or ABAB, and lines usually alternate between six and eight syllables, although this is not a hard and fast rule. Here's a classic example of a ballad written by Sir Walter Raleigh As you came from the holy land Of Walsingham, Met you not with my true love By the way as you came? How shall I know your true love, That have met many one, I went to the holy land, That have come, that have gone? She is neither white, nor brown, But as the heavens fair; There is none hath a form so divine In the earth, or the air. Such one did I meet, good sir, Such an angelic face, Who like a queen, like a nymph, did appear By her gait, by her grace. She hath left me here all alone, All alone, as unknown, Who sometimes did me lead with herself, And me loved as her own. Whats the cause that she leaves you alone, And a new way doth take, Who loved you once as her own, And her joy did you make? I have loved her all my youth; But now old, as you see, Love likes not the falling fruit From the withered tree. Know that love is a careless child, And forgets promise past; He is blind, he is deaf when he list, And in faith never fails. His desire is a durescent content, And a trustless joy: He is won with a world of despair, And is lost with a toy. Of womenkind such indeed is the love, Or the word love abused, Under which many childish desires And conceits are excused. But true love is a durable fire, In the mind ever burning, Never sick, never old, never dead, From itself never turning. The tanka is a traditional Japanese poem that literally translates to short poem or short song. It is known to be the oldest form of poetry in Japan and has roots extending almost 1000 years before the existence of the haiku. Despite their age differences, the tanka is similar to a Haiku since there is an emphasis on the syllables in each line, however there are some key differences. A tanka has thirty-one syllables in total, and it is traditionally written as one unbroken, single line. There are generally five lines; the first is five syllables long, the second is seven, the third is five, and the final two are seven syllables. Here's an example of a Japanese tanka by Yosano Akiko. Note that this poem has been translated from its original Japanese format, and so the syllables in English dont necessarily match up to the traditional tanka format after the translation. That girl, now twenty, As seen in the black hair That flows smoothly through her comb She is in the arrogant spring And so beautiful The ode is a poem written to address a particular subject, either a person, a place, an event, or a thing. Odes have their roots in ancient Greece, and are generally praising in nature, and intended to complement and glorify. Here's a famous ode written by the celebrated English poet, John Keats. Ode to Autumn Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun; Conspiring with him how to load and bless With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run; To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees, And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core; To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells With a sweet kernel; to set budding more, And still more, later flowers for the bees, Until they think warm days will never cease, For summer has o'er-Brimm'd their clammy cells. Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store? Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find Thee sitting careless on a granary floor, Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep, Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook S pares the necks swath and all its twined flowers: And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep Steady thy laden head across a brook; Or by a cyder-press, with patient look, Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours. 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my own poems. In this guide, I'll cover thirteen different types of poems and provide examples of each. Its by no means an exhaustive list, there are an incredible amount of poetic forms out there, but these are the basics. The sonnet, literally meaning little song, is one of the most famous forms of poetry that people are generally most familiar with, and usually originates in Italy. The Sicilian school of poets, for example, was famous for writing sonnets. However, it was made famous in the English language by the poet John Milton. The Petrarchan sonnet, sometimes referred to as the Italian sonnet, but there is also the famous Shakespearean Sonnet, otherwise known as Elizabethan sonnets. These originated in the 16th century after they were brought to England from Italy by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard. The main difference between these two types of sonnets is the rhyme schemes. Rhyme schemes are illustrated in coded letters of the alphabet, for example, ABAB. Lines that are assigned the same letter rhyme with each other, so, in the ABAB example, the first line and the third line rhyme with each other, and the second and the fourth line also rhyme with each other. In a Petrarchan sonnet, the 14 lines are divided into an octet (a group of eight lines) and a sestet (a group of 6 lines). The octet has a rhyme scheme of ABBA ABBA, and the sestet has variable rhyme schemes, e.g., CDD CEE or CD CD CD. There is a pause between the octet and the sestet, which signifies a shift in the poems tone; this is called a volta. Shakespearean sonnets are designed for English rather than Italian, and so their format was adapted to suit the language. Just like Petrarchan sonnets, they also have 14 lines, but they are split into different groups. There are three quatrains (a group of 4 lines) and a rhyming couplet (2 lines) at the end. The rhyme scheme for Shakespearean sonnets is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. Heres an example of a sonnet written in the traditional Petrarchan/Italian format: How Do I Love Thee? by Elizabeth Barrett Browning How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight For the ends of being and ideal grace. I love thee to the level of every days Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light. I love thee freely, as men strive for right. I love thee purely, as they turn from praise. I love thee with the passion put to use In my old griefs, and with my childhoods faith. I love thee with a love I seemed to lose With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath, Smiles, tears, of all my life; And, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death. And for a prize example of a Shakespearean sonnet, lets look to the man himself: My Mistress Eyes are Nothing like the Sun, by William Shakespeare My mistress eyes are nothing like the sun; Corals far more red than her lips red; If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. I have seen roses damask'd, red and white, But no such roses see I in her cheeks; And in some perfumes is there more delight Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks. I love to hear her speak, yet well I know That music hath a far more pleasing sound; I grant I never saw a goddess go; My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground. And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare As any she belied with false compare. You might remember haiku poems from your high school English class. These short poems are popular assignments for students in creative writing, and they can be super fun to play around with, especially if youre pretty new to writing your own poetry. Haikus originate in Japan, after being popularized by the famous Edo poet Matsuo Bash in the 17th century. A haiku generally consists of just 17 syllables arranged over three lines. The first and the third line each has five syllables, whereas the second line has seven. Today, there are popular haikus that cover a huge range of subject matters. Still, traditionally the haiku contained themes of the natural world and often spoke of the changes of the seasons and contrasting organic themes. Heres a classic example of a traditional Japanese haiku. Over the Wintry by Natsume Soseki Over the wintry Forest, winds howl in rage With no leaves to blow. The sestina is another popular type of traditional poem which has its origins in 12th century France. These usually unrhyming poems have strong patterns of repetition and a rigid structure that is quite complex. But once you get the hang it, sestinas become easier to identify since they are unlike anything else. The sestina consists of six stanzas, each six lines long, plus a final 3 line stanza. The last words of the first stanza are then repeated in a different order at the end of each remaining five stanzas. The final three-line stanza contains all of the six repeated words. Heres a classic example of a sestina by Algernon Charles Swinburne I saw my soul at rest upon a day As a bird sleeping in the nest of night, Among soft leaves that give the starlight way To touch its wings but not its eyes with light; So that it knew as men waking, of delight. This was the measure of my souls delight; It had no power of joy to fly by day. Nor part in the large lordship of the light; But in a secret moon-behown way Had all its will of dreams and pleasant night, And all the love and life that sleepers may. But such lifes triumph as men waking may It might not have to feed its faint delight Between the stars by night and sun by day, Shut up with green leaves and a little light; Because its way was as a lost stars way, A worlds not wholly known of day or night. All loves and dreams and sounds and gleams of night, Nor closer touch conclusive of delight, Nor mightier joy nor truer than dreamers may, Nor more of song than they, nor more of light. For who sleeps once and sees the secret light Whereby sleep shows the soul a fairer way Between the rise and rest of day and night, Shall care no more to fare as all men may, But be his place of pain or of delight, There shall he dwell, beholding night as day. Song, have thy day and take thy fill of light Before the night be fallen across thy way; Sing while he may, man hath no long delight. Villanelles are quite similar to sonnets and sestinas in the sense that they have strict rules and rhyme schemes. These structured poems are 19 lines long and just like the sestina, and they feature plenty of repetition. They are generally ordered into five three-line stanzas, followed by one stanza with four lines. Remember the rhyming schemes we talked about in sonnets? Villanelles also follow a rhyming scheme; in this case, its usually ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA. Youll notice that there are only two rhyming sounds (A and B) in the rhyming scheme of a villanelle. As I mentioned, theres a lot of repetition, both in the rhyme and in the lines of the poem. The first line of the poem is repeated in the 6th, 12th, and 18th lines, and the 3rd line is repeated in the 9th, 15th, and 19th lines. A villanelle is highly structured, which can be challenging at first, but it can also be a blessing when it comes to writing your own poetry; sometimes the constraints of a few rules help to give your creativity more direction. One of the most famous examples of a villanelle poem is by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night. Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rave at close of day; Rage, rage against the dying of the light. Though wise men at their end know dark is right, Because their words had forked no lightning they Do not go gentle into that good night. Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, Rage, rage against the dying of the light. Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way, Do not go gentle into that good night. Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, Rage, rage against the dying of the light. And you, my father, there on the sad height, Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light. Acrostic poems spell out a word, phrase, or name with the first letter of each line. Most people will remember having fun with acrostic poems in school. Kids particularly love acrostic poems in school. Kids have simple rules and theres plenty of room for creativity, but thats not to say there arent plenty of serious writers throughout history who have harnessed the acrostic poem too, such as this example from Edgar Allan Poe: An Acrostic Elizabeth It is in vain you say Love not thou sayest it in so sweet away: In vain those words from thee or L.E.L. Zantippes talents had enforced so well: Ah! if that language from thy heart arise, Breathe it less gently forth and veil thine eyes. Endymion, recollect, when Luna tried To cure his love was cured of all beside His follie pride and passion for he died. An elegy is a traditional poem with roots that trace back to the ancient Greeks. Elegies generally contain an overriding theme of death, loss, mourning, or reflection. They were and still are, used as a form of high public standing. There are also occasions where elegies have been used to explore a broader sense of loss, for example, the end of a civilization or era. Elegies dont have a rigid structure that they must follow. Instead, the definition of an elegy is derived from the overriding theme of the poem, which in this case, is death. Heres a famous example of an elegy by W H Auden: Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone, Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone, Silence the pianos and with muffled drum Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come. Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead, Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves, Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves. He was my North, my South, my East and West, My working week and my Sunday rest, By noon, my midnight, my talk, my song; I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong. The stars are not wanted now: put out every one; Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun; Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood; For nothing now can ever come to any good. Concrete poetry is focused not just on the meaning of the words but also on the visual representation of those words on the page and how they are arranged. Concrete poetry is often written in a particular form, shape, or image that adds an extra dimension of meaning to the poem itself. One very basic example that many people will recognize is a romantic poem that has been written in the shape of a love heart, but there plenty of more meaningful and original examples out there too. One classic example is Easter Wings by the 17th century Welsh-born poet George Herbert. This poem was originally presented sideways to replicate the organic shape of wings. Its a wonderful example of how the meaning in words can be reflected visually in concrete poetry. The poem starts out in a dark and somber tone, but as the curve in the shape of a wing starts to widen out, the mood is lightened and hopeful, with the line O let me rise. Lord, who created man in wealth and store, Though foolishly he lost the same, Decaying more and more, Till he became Most poor: With thee O let me rise As larks, harmoniously, And sing this day thy victories: Then shall the fall further the flight in me. My tender age and still I dwell In this bleak world of desolation grim, And still I dwell in sickness and shame, Though dost to punish sinne, That I became Most thine, And feel thy victory: For if I limp my wing on thine, Affliction shall advance the flight in me. Limericks are simple five-line poems that have their roots in Ireland and England (the precise location is still disputed by historians). They consist of five lines that form one single stanza and follow the rhyme scheme of AABBA. The first two lines are generally longer, the second two are shorter, and the final line is a summary, often even a kind of punch line that completes the poem. Although you might not know it, youre most likely familiar with limerick style poems as theyre used popularly in jovial descriptions, and many of them follow a kind of humorous, nursery rhyme tone. Limericks are also found in a lot of traditional folk songs from the British Isles. Heres a classic example from the father of the limerick, Edward Lear. There was an Old Man with a beard, Who said, It is just as I feared! Two Owls and a Hen, Four Larks and a Wren, Have all built their nests in my beard! Epigrams are not always poems, but they often are. An epigram is a clever, witty, wise, or amusing remark delivered in an often satirical way. Theyre short by nature and often have a funny ending. Here are a few famous examples of epigrams: I didnt attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it. Mark Twain, I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman. Virginia Woolf Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one. Marcus Aurelius We must all either wear out or rust out, every one of us. My choice is to wear out. Theodore Roosevelt This is not your responsibility but it is your problem. Cheryl Strayed If you see fraud and do not say fraud, you are a fraud. Nicholas Nassim Taleb Many of us are used to hearing ballads in the form of music, but that not always how theyre presented. A ballad is a way of telling a story through poetry. Its an ancient form of poem that was traditionally passed down from generation to generation, often only orally. Ballads are typically written in quatrains (four-line groups); however, there are plenty of examples that deviate from this structure. The rhyming scheme is ABCB or ABAB, and lines usually alternate between six and eight syllables, although this is not a hard and fast rule. Heres a classic example of a ballad written by Sir Walter Raleigh as You came from the holy land Of Walsingham, Met you not with my true love By the way as you came? How shall I know your true love, That have met many one, I went to the holy land, That have come, that have gone? She is neither white, nor brown, But as the heavens fair; There is none hath a form so divine In the earth, or the air. Such a one did I meet, good sir, Such an angelic face, Who like a queen, like a nymph, did appear By her gait, by her grace. She hath left me here all alone, All alone, as unknown, Who sometimes did me lead with herself, And me loved as her own. Whats the cause that she leaves you alone, And a new way do take, Who loved you once as her own, And her joy did you make? I have loved her all my youth; But now old, as you see, Love likes not the falling fur from the withered tree. Know that love is a careless child, And forgets promise past; He is blind, he is deaf when he list, And in faith never fast. His desire is a dullest content, And a trustless joy: He is won with a world of despair, And is lost with a toy. Of womenkind such indeed is the love, Or the word love abused, Under which many childish desires And conceits are excusd. But true love is a durable fire, In the mind ever burning, Never sick, never old, never dead, From itself never turning. The tanka is a traditional Japanese poem that literally translates to short poem or short song. Its known to be the oldest form of poetry in Japan and has roots extending almost 1000 years before the existence of the haiku. Despite their age differences, the tanka is similar to a Haiku since there is an emphasis on the syllables in each line, however there are some key differences. A tanka has thirty-one syllables in total, and it is traditionally written as one unbroken, single line. There are generally five lines; the first is five syllables long, the second is seven, the third is five, and the final two are seven syllables. Heres an example of a Japanese tanka poem written to address a particular subject, either a person, a place, an event, or a thing. Odes have their roots in ancient Greece, and are generally praising in nature, and intended to complement and glorify. Heres a famous ode written by the celebrated English poet, John Keats. Ode to Autumn Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun; Conspiring with him how to load and bless With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run; To bend with apples the mossd cottage-trees, And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core; To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells With a sweet kernel; to set budding more, And still more, later flowers for the bees, Until they think warm days will never cease, For summer has oer-Brimm'd their clammy cells. When shall I next see thee Of amid thy store? Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find Thee sitting careless on a granary floor, Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep, Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook S pares the next swath and all its twined flowers: And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep Steady thy laden head across a brook; Or by a cyder-press, with patient look, Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours. Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they? Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue; Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn Among the



Eklphrastic5. Concrete PoetryThe Altar by George Herbert was intended to resemble a church altar:A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy servants tears,Made of a heart and cemented with tears,Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;No workman's tool hath touch'd the same,A HEART aloneIs such a stone,As nothing butThy pow'r doth cut.Wherefore each partOf my hard heartMeets in this frameTo praise thy name.That if I chance to hold my peace,These stones to praise thee may not cease.Oh, let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,And sanctify this ALTAR to be thine.6. ElegyThe elegy is another type of poem that lacks particular rules, but it usually is written in mourning following a death. They can be written for a particular person, or treat the subject of loss more generally.Example of an ElegyOne famous example of an elegy is Walt Whitmans O Captain, My Captain, which Whitman wrote following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.O Captain! My Captain! rise up and hear the bells;Rise upfor you the flag is hungfor you the bugle trills;For you bouquets and ribbond wreathsfors you the shores a-crowding;For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;Here captain! dear father!This arm beneath your head;It is some dream that on the deck,Youve fallen cold and dead.My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;The ship is anchord safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!But I, with mournful tread,Walk the deck my captain lies,Fallen cold and dead.7. EpigramEpigrams are short, witty, and often satirical poems that usually take the form of a couplet or quatrain (2-4 lines in length).Example of an EpigramAn example of this wit is provided by Samuel Taylor Coleridge:Sir, I admit your general rule,That every poet is a fool,But you yourself may serve to show it,That every fool is not a poet.Epigrams are not exclusive to poetry. They are also commonly used as literary devices and in speeches. John F. Kennedys famous quote, Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind is one such example.8. LimerickLimericks are humorous poems that have a more distinct rhythm. Their subject matter is sometimes crude, but always designed to offer laughs.Limerick Characteristics and Rules 5 lines 2 longer lines (usually 7-10 syllables) 2 shorter lines (usually 5-7 syllables) 1 closing line to bring the joke home (7-10 syllables) Rhyme scheme: AABBAExamples of LimericksThere once was an old man of NantucketWho kept all his cash in a bucketHis daughter, called Nan,Ran away with a man,And as for the bucket, Nantucket AnonymousA wonderful bird is the pelican,His bill can hold more than his belly-can,He can take in his beakFood enough for a weekBut Im damned if I see how the hell-can.Dixon Lanier Merritt9. BalladBallads usually take a narrative form to tell us stories. They are often arranged in quatrains, but the form is loose enough that writers can easily modify it.Ballad Characteristics and Rules Typically arranged in groups of 4 lines Rhyme scheme: ABAB or ABCBExamples of BalladsAnnabel Lee by Edgar Allan Poe (first two stanzas):It was many and many a year ago,In a kingdom by the sea,That a maiden there lived whom you may knowBy the name of Annabel Lee;And this maiden she lived with no other thoughtThan to love and be loved by me.I was a child and she was a child,In this kingdom by the sea,But we loved with a love that was more than loveI and Annabel LeeWith a love that the windg seraphs of HeavenCoveted her and me.Some songs fit the ballad definition and have been passed down today. See this excerpt from the Irish ballad Danny Boy:Oh Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are callingFrom glen to glen, and down the mountain sideThe summers gone, and all the flowers are dyingTis you, tis you must go and I must bide.10. EpitaphAn epitaph is much like an elegy, only shorter. Epitaphs commonly appear on gravestones, but they can also be humorous. There are no specific rules for epitaphs or their rhyme schemes.Examples of EpitaphsFrom William Shakespeares gravestone:Good friend for Jesus sake forbear,To dig the dust enclosed here.Blessed be the man that spares these stones,And cursed be he that moves by bones.Epitaph by Edna St. Vincent MillayHeap not on this moundRoses that she loved so well:Why bewilder her with roses,That she cannot see or smell?She is happy where she liesWith the dust upon her eyes.11. OdeOdes address a specific person, thing, or event. The ode is believed to have been invented by the ancient Greeks, who would sing their odes. Modern odes follow an irregular pattern and are not required to rhyme.Example of an OdeOde to the West Wind by Percy Bysshe ShelleyScatter, as from an unextinguishd hearthAshes and sparks, my words among mankind!Be through my lips to unawakend earthThe trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?!2. Free VerseFree verse is exactly what its name implies. There are no rules, and writers can do whatever they choose: to rhyme or not, to establish any rhythm. Free verse is often used in contemporary poetry.Example of a Free Verse PoemA Noiseless Patient Spider by Walt WhitmanA noiseless patient spider:I markd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,Markd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,It launchd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.And you O my soul where you stand,Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,Till the bridge you will need be formd, till the ductile anchor hold,Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.Tips for Writing PoetryStill need a little extra nudge to get started? Theres no better way to learn than by reading some great poetry.You can also check out our post on how to write a poemso you can get inspired to start writing.Do you have a favorite poem? Feel free to share it with us in the comments below!If you enjoyed this post, you might also like: As a blog writer for TCK Publishing, Kaelyn loves crafting fun and helpful content for writers, readers, and creative minds alike. She has a degree in International Affairs with a minor in Italian Studies, but her true passion has always been writing. Working remotely allows her to do even more of the things she loves, like traveling, cooking, and spending time with her family.Poetry is a collective name given for poems in general. Like all literature, poetry is not constrained to a particular type, we come across different styles of expressing emotions. This is the sole reason why, we have so many types of poems.Home / Uncategorized / An Exhaustive List of All the Types of Poetry With ExamplesPoetry is a collective name given for poems in general. Like all literature, poetry is not constrained to a particular type, we come across different styles of expressing emotions. This is the sole reason why, we have so many types of poems. Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.William Wordsworth Poetry is a major form of literature which is in a position to sub-ordinate medium to transmute emotions. It appeals to the highest faculty of man that is, his soul. It evokes emotions and brings up pictures through effective descriptions. Poetry, as we understand through the words of Coleridge is, the best words in their best order;Just as an artist uses colors to breathe life to his art, a poet uses words to give expression to his experiences and emotional life. A poet, employs different techniques and poetic devices to bring out the aesthetic value of words. These words are capable of conveying the underlying emotions and thus are able to lead to a catharsis. Seen in this light, a poem can be defined as a piece of writing in which, the words are specifically chosen for the ideas and images they are capable of etching in the minds of their readers. The Defining FactorWhat differentiates poetry from prose, is the style of writing and the arrangement of words. While prose consists of a set of sentences, a poem makes use of rhythmically arranged sentences often placed one below the other for effect. Poetry uses different techniques like meter, rhyme and sound devices to reveal the deeper aspects of experiences of the poet. It is also used as a measure to reinforce the theme.The Major CategoriesDescriptive PoetryAs the name suggests, descriptive poems are centered around the object of interest and they serve a didactic purpose. Descriptive poems compel the reader to visualize the object, place or person of interest as pictured by the poet himself. An Example: Smoke by Henry David Thoreau. Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,Lark without song, and messenger of dawnCircling above the hamlets as they nest;Or else, departing dream, and shadowy formOf midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;By night star-veiling, and by dayDarkening the light and blotting out the sun;Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.Reflective PoetryReflective poems contain some explicit or implicit generalization about life. Simply put, it is a mere reflection of the state of mind of the poet, put forth in a poetic manner. An Example: Human Seasons by John Keats.FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year;There are four seasons in the mind of man:He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clearTakes in all beauty with an easy span:He has his lustrous Summer, when luxuriouslySprings honeyd cud of youthful thought he lovesTo ruminate, and by such dreaming highs nearest unto heaven: quiet covesHis soul has in its Autumm, when his wingsHe fureth close; contented so to lookOn mists in idleness to let fair thingsPass by unheeded as a threshold brook.He has his Winter too of pale misfeature, Or else he would forego his mortal nature.Narrative PoetryThe poet narrates a story through the use of poetic diction. It is considered to be one of the oldest form of poetry and it often focuses on the pros and cons of life. An Example: An excerpt from The Charge of the Light Brigade by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Half a league, half a league,Half a league onward,All in the valley of Death,Rode the six hundred Forward, the Light Brigade!Charge for the guns he said:Into the valley of DeathRode the six hundred.Lyric PoetryA lyric is a short poem which has the characteristics of a song. It pertains to a single mood or feeling and is more personal in nature. An example: An excerpt from A Red, Red Rose by Robert Burns.O my Luves like a red, red roseThats newly sprung in June;O my Luves like the melodieThats sweetly playd in tune.As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,So deep in luv am I:And I will luv thee still, my dear,Till a the seas gang dry:SonnetA sonnet is a relatively short poem consisting of merely 14 lines. It is known to follow a strict pattern of rhyme. It is divided into two parts the octave and the concluding sestet. This separation marks the break in thought. It is further classified into Petrarchan, Shakespearean and Miltonic sonnets. An example: Sonnet 116 by Shakespeare.Shakespearean SonnetA Shakespearean sonnet:14 lines (three quatrains and a couplet)Written in iambic pentameter (a weak syllable followed by an accented syllable five times)Rhyme scheme is a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g Let me not to the marriage of true mindsAdmit impediments. Love is not loveWhich alters when it alteration finds,Or bends with the remover to remove:O no! it is an ever-fixed markThat looks on tempests and is never shaken;It is the star to every wandering bark,Whose worths unknown, although his height be taken.Loves not Times fool, though rosy lips and cheeksWithin his bending sickles compass come:Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,But bears it out even to the edge of doom.If this be error and upon me proved,I never writ, nor no man ever loved.ElegyThe tone of this type of poem is often set in melancholy and is known to be a funeral song. Most of the elegies are pastoral in nature that is, it is the lament of a poet mourning the loss of another fellow poet. An example: An excerpt from Lycidas by John Milton.Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once moreYe Myrtles brown, with Ivy never-sear, I com to pluck your Berries harsh and crude,And with forced fingers rude,Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,Compels me to disturb your season due:For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:OdeThis type of poem is a direct address to a particular person or a thing. It is relatively elaborate in its structure. It is divided into three parts namely, the strophe, antistrophe and epode. Odes have a serious overtone, with the strophe and the antistrophe looking at the subject from conflicting perspectives and the epode trying to resolve the underlying issues. An example: An excerpt from Ode on a Grecian Urn by John Keats.Thou still unravishd bride of quietness,Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,Sylvan historian, who canst thus expressA flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:What leaf-fringd legend haunts about thy shapeOf 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?BalladA ballad is a type of a narrative poem which deals with a heroic theme. A ballad has musical quality and it has a set theme and a fixed metrical form. The modern ballads have taken on the form of single spirited poems with short stanzas that narrate a popular story graphically. An example: An excerpt from The Walrus and the Carpenter by Lewis Carroll.The sun was shining on the sea,Shining with all his might:He did his very best to makeThe billows smooth and brightAnd this was odd, because it wasThe middle of the night.The moon was shining sulkily,Because she thought the sunHad got no business to be thereAfter the day was doneIts very rude of him, she said,To come and spoil the fun!EpicIt is a heroic poem that deals with the ethos of the period. There are two types of epic, one that is concerned with growth while the other with art. Epics are generally grander in the portrayal of the style and their theme. It is an account of the life and works of a heroic or mythological person.An example: An excerpt from Paradise Lost by Milton.Of Mans First Disobedience, and the FruitOf that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tastBrought Death into the World, and all our woe,With loss of Eden, till one greater ManRestore us, and regain the blissful Seat,Sing Heavly Muse, that on the secret topOf Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspireThat Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,In the Beginning how the Heavns and EarthRose out of Chaos: Or if Sion HillDelight thee more, and Siloas Brook that flowdFast by the Oracle of God; I thenceInvoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,That with no middle flight intends to soarAbove th Anonian Mount, while it pursuesThings unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.LimericksA limerick is a humorous or a nonsensical poem consisting of a stanza made up of five lines. It is in a folk form and is essentially transgressive and bordering on obscene. There was a Young Lady of Lucca by Edward Lear is an example:There was a Young Lady of Lucca,Whose lovers completely forsook her;She ran up a tree,And said, Fiddle-de-dee!Which embarrassed the people of Lucca.These are by no means, all types of poetry forms used. But these are the basics. Most poets use these forms and structures while writing their poems. The form and structure of the poem, ideally should not limit the thought or the idea conveyed by the poet. However, these styles of writing help make the poem more musical in its flow. Sign up to receive the latest and greatest articles from our site automatically each week (give or take)...right to your inbox.

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