Poetics Exercise 2: Rhyme

Part One Due Tuesday, 10/1 by start of class. Submit via Google Classroom

**First Part:** Analysis

Choose any rhyming poem we have read, or a personal favorite – perhaps something you memorized at home or school? Then choose two rhyme sets that struck you as particularly inventive, witty, or otherwise interesting. This can be as short as two couplets, or part of a longer stanza (i.e. a sonnet). If you choose a larger stanza than a couplet you will have to consider more rhyme words—though that is not necessarily more difficult! Then do the following for each example.

Instructions:

1. Re-type the lines carefully in a new document. Resist the urge to copy-paste.
2. For each set of rhymes, describe the similarity or difference between the rhyme words: think about grammatical category (are they the same part of speech?), stress (do they have equal stress?), eye rhymes (are they spelled alike?), enjambment, and above all the category or register of the rhyme word (is one an elevated word and the other base? One technical, the other mundane? Etc). Use the OED as needed.
3. Describe how the lines relate to each other: is there ironic difference? Parallelism? Antithesis? Bathos (comic drop-off in seriousness)? Or does the rhyme lack such immediate effects, instead relating to broader structures (i.e. how does the rhyme relate to its stanza, to other rhymes, or to the poem as a whole)?

**Second Part:** You Rhyme

Choose a piece of prose or non-rhyming poetry of modest length (enough syllables to generate 4 couplets or 2 quatrains). Rewrite the text in couplets (AABBCCDD) or quatrains (ABAB CDCD). If you know how to make the lines metrical, great! If not, you can ask Professor Glaser for help or just make the lines about 8-10 syllables long. You may change a few words as needed. The key will be the rhyme: see how cleverly you can bring together different kinds of words.

Your poem should be about 8 lines (more if necessary). Write a few sentences afterward discussing your favorites rhyme(s).

**Optional:** Type up a favorite example of rhyme from music (any genre – hip hop is often the most creative in its rhymes) and share with class. Here’s an effective AABCCB rhyming stanza by Kacey Musgraves:

Mama's hooked on Mary Kay

Brother's hooked on Mary Jane

And Daddy's hooked on Mary two doors down

Mary, Mary, quite contrary

We get bored so we get married

And just like dust, we settle in this town.

Notice how “down” and “town” is a full and fairly plain rhyme, but that contrasts with the partial and playful rhymes of “Mary Kay / Mary Jane” and “quite contrary” / “we get married.” Those may not look like rhymes on the page, but they sound like it when sung. Why is that? These lines also help show how rhyme is a kind of parallelism, but an illogical one compared with syntax (“hooked on x, hooked on y”).