

= Poetry =

Poetry is a form of literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language ? such as phonaesthetics , sound symbolism , and metre ? to evoke meanings in addition to , or in place of , the prosaic ostensible meaning .

Poetry has a long history , dating back to the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh . Early poems evolved from folk songs such as the Chinese Shijing , or from a need to retell oral epics , as with the Sanskrit Vedas , Zoroastrian Gathas , and the Homeric epics , the Iliad and the Odyssey . Ancient attempts to define poetry , such as Aristotle 's Poetics , focused on the uses of speech in rhetoric , drama , song and comedy . Later attempts concentrated on features such as repetition , verse form and rhyme , and emphasized the aesthetics which distinguish poetry from more objectively informative , prosaic forms of writing . From the mid @-@ 20th century , poetry has sometimes been more generally regarded as a fundamental creative act employing language .

Poetry uses forms and conventions to suggest differential interpretation to words , or to evoke emotive responses . Devices such as assonance , alliteration , onomatopoeia and rhythm are sometimes used to achieve musical or incantatory effects . The use of ambiguity , symbolism , irony and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations . Similarly figures of speech such as metaphor , simile and metonymy create a resonance between otherwise disparate images ? a layering of meanings , forming connections previously not perceived . Kindred forms of resonance may exist , between individual verses , in their patterns of rhyme or rhythm .

Some poetry types are specific to particular cultures and genres and respond to characteristics of the language in which the poet writes . Readers accustomed to identifying poetry with Dante , Goethe , Mickiewicz and Rumi may think of it as written in lines based on rhyme and regular meter ; there are , however , traditions , such as Biblical poetry , that use other means to create rhythm and euphony . Much modern poetry reflects a critique of poetic tradition , playing with and testing , among other things , the principle of euphony itself , sometimes altogether forgoing rhyme or set rhythm . In today 's increasingly globalized world , poets often adapt forms , styles and techniques from diverse cultures and languages .

= = History = =

Poetry as an art form may predate literacy . The oldest surviving epic poem is the Epic of Gilgamesh , from the 3rd millennium BC in Sumer (in Mesopotamia , now Iraq) , which was written in cuneiform script on clay tablets and , later , papyrus . A tablet dating to c . 2000 BC describes an annual rite in which the king symbolically married and mated with the goddess Inanna to ensure fertility and prosperity , and is considered the world 's oldest love poem . Examples of Egyptian epic poetry include The Story of Sinuhe (c . 1800 BC) . Other ancient epic poetry includes the Greek epics Iliad and Odyssey , the Avestan books the Gathic Avesta and Yasna , the Roman national epic , Virgil 's Aeneid , and the Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata .

Epic poetry , including the Indian Vedas , the Gathas , and the Odyssey , appears to have been composed in poetic form to aid memorization and oral transmission , in prehistoric and ancient societies . Other forms of poetry developed directly from folk songs . The earliest entries in the ancient compilation Shijing , were initially lyrics , preceding later entries intended to be read .

The efforts of ancient thinkers to determine what makes poetry distinctive as a form , and what distinguishes good poetry from bad , resulted in " poetics " ? the study of the aesthetics of poetry . Some ancient poetic traditions ; such as , contextually , Classical Chinese poetry in the case of the Shijing (Classic of Poetry) , which records the development of poetic canons with ritual and aesthetic importance . More recently , thinkers have struggled to find a definition that could encompass formal differences as great as those between Chaucer 's Canterbury Tales and Matsuo Basho 's Oku no Hosomichi , as well as differences in context spanning Tanakh religious poetry , love poetry , and rap .

= = = Western traditions = = =

Classical thinkers employed classification as a way to define and assess the quality of poetry . Notably , the existing fragments of Aristotle 's Poetics describe three genres of poetry ? the epic , the comic , and the tragic ? and develop rules to distinguish the highest @-@ quality poetry in each genre , based on the underlying purposes of the genre . Later aestheticians identified three major genres : epic poetry , lyric poetry , and dramatic poetry , treating comedy and tragedy as subgenres of dramatic poetry .

Aristotle 's work was influential throughout the Middle East during the Islamic Golden Age , as well as in Europe during the Renaissance . Later poets and aestheticians often distinguished poetry from , and defined it in opposition to prose , which was generally understood as writing with a proclivity to logical explication and a linear narrative structure .

This does not imply that poetry is illogical or lacks narration , but rather that poetry is an attempt to render the beautiful or sublime without the burden of engaging the logical or narrative thought process . English Romantic poet John Keats termed this escape from logic " Negative Capability " . This " romantic " approach views form as a key element of successful poetry because form is abstract and distinct from the underlying notional logic . This approach remained influential into the 20th century .

During this period , there was also substantially more interaction among the various poetic traditions , in part due to the spread of European colonialism and the attendant rise in global trade . In addition to a boom in translation , during the Romantic period numerous ancient works were rediscovered .

= = = 20th @-@ century and 21st @-@ century disputes = = =

Some 20th @-@ century literary theorists , relying less on the opposition of prose and poetry , focused on the poet as simply one who creates using language , and poetry as what the poet creates . The underlying concept of the poet as creator is not uncommon , and some modernist poets essentially do not distinguish between the creation of a poem with words , and creative acts in other media . Yet other modernists challenge the very attempt to define poetry as misguided .

The rejection of traditional forms and structures for poetry that began in the first half of the 20th century coincided with a questioning of the purpose and meaning of traditional definitions of poetry and of distinctions between poetry and prose , particularly given examples of poetic prose and prosaic poetry . Numerous modernist poets have written in non @-@ traditional forms or in what traditionally would have been considered prose , although their writing was generally infused with poetic diction and often with rhythm and tone established by non @-@ metrical means . While there was a substantial formalist reaction within the modernist schools to the breakdown of structure , this reaction focused as much on the development of new formal structures and syntheses as on the revival of older forms and structures .

Recently , postmodernism has come to convey more completely prose and poetry as distinct entities , and also among genres of poetry , as having meaning only as cultural artifacts . Postmodernism goes beyond modernism 's emphasis on the creative role of the poet , to emphasize the role of the reader of a text (Hermeneutics) , and to highlight the complex cultural web within which a poem is read . Today , throughout the world , poetry often incorporates poetic form and diction from other cultures and from the past , further confounding attempts at definition and classification that were once sensible within a tradition such as the Western canon .

The early 21st century poetic tradition appears to continue to strongly orient itself to earlier precursor poetic traditions such as those initiated by Whitman , Emerson , and Wordsworth . The literary critic Geoffrey Hartman has used the phrase " the anxiety of demand " to describe contemporary response to older poetic traditions as " being fearful that the fact no longer has a form " , building on a trope introduced by Emerson . Emerson had maintained that in the debate concerning poetic structure where either " form " or " fact " could predominate , that one need simply " Ask the fact for the form . " This has been challenged at various levels by other literary scholars such as Bloom who has stated in summary form concerning the early 21st century that : " The

generation of poets who stand together now , mature and ready to write the major American verse of the twenty @-@ first century , may yet be seen as what Stevens called ' a great shadow 's last embellishment , ' the shadow being Emerson 's . "

= = Elements = =

= = = Prosody = = =

Prosody is the study of the meter , rhythm , and intonation of a poem . Rhythm and meter are different , although closely related . Meter is the definitive pattern established for a verse (such as iambic pentameter) , while rhythm is the actual sound that results from a line of poetry . Prosody also may be used more specifically to refer to the scanning of poetic lines to show meter .

= = = = Rhythm = = = =

The methods for creating poetic rhythm vary across languages and between poetic traditions . Languages are often described as having timing set primarily by accents , syllables , or moras , depending on how rhythm is established , though a language can be influenced by multiple approaches . Japanese is a mora @-@ timed language . Syllable @-@ timed languages include Latin , Catalan , French , Leonese , Galician and Spanish . English , Russian and , generally , German are stress @-@ timed languages . Varying intonation also affects how rhythm is perceived . Languages can rely on either pitch , such as in Vedic Sanskrit or Ancient Greek , or tone . Tonal languages include Chinese , Vietnamese and most Sub-Saharan languages .

Metrical rhythm generally involves precise arrangements of stresses or syllables into repeated patterns called feet within a line . In Modern English verse the pattern of stresses primarily differentiate feet , so rhythm based on meter in Modern English is most often founded on the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables (alone or elided) . In the classical languages , on the other hand , while the metrical units are similar , vowel length rather than stresses define the meter . Old English poetry used a metrical pattern involving varied numbers of syllables but a fixed number of strong stresses in each line .

The chief device of ancient Hebrew Biblical poetry , including many of the psalms , was parallelism , a rhetorical structure in which successive lines reflected each other in grammatical structure , sound structure , notional content , or all three . Parallelism lent itself to antiphonal or call @-@ and @-@ response performance , which could also be reinforced by intonation . Thus , Biblical poetry relies much less on metrical feet to create rhythm , but instead creates rhythm based on much larger sound units of lines , phrases and sentences . Some classical poetry forms , such as Venpa of the Tamil language , had rigid grammars (to the point that they could be expressed as a context @-@ free grammar) which ensured a rhythm . In Chinese poetry , tones as well as stresses create rhythm . Classical Chinese poetics identifies four tones : the level tone , rising tone , departing tone , and entering tone .

The formal patterns of meter used in Modern English verse to create rhythm no longer dominate contemporary English poetry . In the case of free verse , rhythm is often organized based on looser units of cadence rather than a regular meter . Robinson Jeffers , Marianne Moore , and William Carlos Williams are three notable poets who reject the idea that regular accentual meter is critical to English poetry . Jeffers experimented with sprung rhythm as an alternative to accentual rhythm .

= = = = Meter = = = =

In the Western poetic tradition , meters are customarily grouped according to a characteristic metrical foot and the number of feet per line . The number of metrical feet in a line are described using Greek terminology : tetrameter for four feet and hexameter for six feet , for example . Thus , " iambic pentameter " is a meter comprising five feet per line , in which the predominant kind of foot is

the " iamb " . This metric system originated in ancient Greek poetry , and was used by poets such as Pindar and Sappho , and by the great tragedians of Athens . Similarly , " dactylic hexameter " , comprises six feet per line , of which the dominant kind of foot is the " dactyl " . Dactylic hexameter was the traditional meter of Greek epic poetry , the earliest extant examples of which are the works of Homer and Hesiod . Iambic pentameter and dactylic hexameter were later used by a number of poets , including William Shakespeare and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow , respectively . The most common metrical feet in English are :

iamb ? one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (e.g. describe , Include , retract)

trochee ? one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable (e.g. picture , flower)

dactyl ? one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables (e.g. annotate an @-@ no @-@
tate)

anapest ? two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed syllable (e.g. comprehend com @-@
pre @-@ hend)

spondee ? two stressed syllables together (e.g. e @-@ nough)

pyrrhic ? two unstressed syllables together (rare , usually used to end dactylic hexameter)

There are a wide range of names for other types of feet , right up to a choriamb , a four syllable metric foot with a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables and closing with a stressed syllable . The choriamb is derived from some ancient Greek and Latin poetry . Languages which utilize vowel length or intonation rather than or in addition to syllabic accents in determining meter , such as Ottoman Turkish or Vedic , often have concepts similar to the iamb and dactyl to describe common combinations of long and short sounds .

Each of these types of feet has a certain " feel " , " whether alone or in combination with other feet . The iamb , for example , is the most natural form of rhythm in the English language , and generally produces a subtle but stable verse . Scanning meter can often show the basic or fundamental pattern underlying a verse , but does not show the varying degrees of stress , as well as the differing pitches and lengths of syllables .

There is debate over how useful a multiplicity of different " feet " is in describing meter . For example , Robert Pinsky has argued that while dactyls are important in classical verse , English dactylic verse uses dactyls very irregularly and can be better described based on patterns of iambs and anapests , feet which he considers natural to the language . Actual rhythm is significantly more complex than the basic scanned meter described above , and many scholars have sought to develop systems that would scan such complexity . Vladimir Nabokov noted that overlaid on top of the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of verse was a separate pattern of accents resulting from the natural pitch of the spoken words , and suggested that the term " scud " be used to distinguish an unaccented stress from an accented stress .

=== Metrical patterns ===

Different traditions and genres of poetry tend to use different meters , ranging from the Shakespearean iambic pentameter and the Homeric dactylic hexameter to the anapestic tetrameter used in many nursery rhymes . However , a number of variations to the established meter are common , both to provide emphasis or attention to a given foot or line and to avoid boring repetition . For example , the stress in a foot may be inverted , a caesura (or pause) may be added (sometimes in place of a foot or stress) , or the final foot in a line may be given a feminine ending to soften it or be replaced by a spondee to emphasize it and create a hard stop . Some patterns (such as iambic pentameter) tend to be fairly regular , while other patterns , such as dactylic hexameter , tend to be highly irregular . Regularity can vary between language . In addition , different patterns often develop distinctively in different languages , so that , for example , iambic tetrameter in Russian will generally reflect a regularity in the use of accents to reinforce the meter , which does not occur , or occurs to a much lesser extent , in English .

Some common metrical patterns , with notable examples of poets and poems who use them , include :

Iambic pentameter (John Milton in Paradise Lost , William Shakespeare in his Sonnets)

Dactylic hexameter (Homer , Iliad ; Virgil , Aeneid)

Iambic tetrameter (Andrew Marvell , " To His Coy Mistress " ; Aleksandr Pushkin , Eugene Onegin , Robert Frost , Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening)

Trochaic octameter (Edgar Allan Poe , " The Raven ")

Alexandrine (Jean Racine , Phèdre)

= = = Rhyme , alliteration , assonance = = =

Rhyme , alliteration , assonance and consonance are ways of creating repetitive patterns of sound . They may be used as an independent structural element in a poem , to reinforce rhythmic patterns , or as an ornamental element . They can also carry a meaning separate from the repetitive sound patterns created . For example , Chaucer used heavy alliteration to mock Old English verse and to paint a character as archaic .

Rhyme consists of identical (" hard @-@ rhyme ") or similar (" soft @-@ rhyme ") sounds placed at the ends of lines or at predictable locations within lines (" internal rhyme ") . Languages vary in the richness of their rhyming structures ; Italian , for example , has a rich rhyming structure permitting maintenance of a limited set of rhymes throughout a lengthy poem . The richness results from word endings that follow regular forms . English , with its irregular word endings adopted from other languages , is less rich in rhyme . The degree of richness of a language 's rhyming structures plays a substantial role in determining what poetic forms are commonly used in that language .

Alliteration is the repetition of letters or letter @-@ sounds at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding each other , or at short intervals ; or the recurrence of the same letter in accented parts of words . Alliteration and assonance played a key role in structuring early Germanic , Norse and Old English forms of poetry . The alliterative patterns of early Germanic poetry interweave meter and alliteration as a key part of their structure , so that the metrical pattern determines when the listener expects instances of alliteration to occur . This can be compared to an ornamental use of alliteration in most Modern European poetry , where alliterative patterns are not formal or carried through full stanzas . Alliteration is particularly useful in languages with less rich rhyming structures .

Assonance , where the use of similar vowel sounds within a word rather than similar sounds at the beginning or end of a word , was widely used in skaldic poetry , but goes back to the Homeric epic . Because verbs carry much of the pitch in the English language , assonance can loosely evoke the tonal elements of Chinese poetry and so is useful in translating Chinese poetry . Consonance occurs where a consonant sound is repeated throughout a sentence without putting the sound only at the front of a word . Consonance provokes a more subtle effect than alliteration and so is less useful as a structural element .

= = = Rhyming schemes = = =

In many languages , including modern European languages and Arabic , poets use rhyme in set patterns as a structural element for specific poetic forms , such as ballads , sonnets and rhyming couplets . However , the use of structural rhyme is not universal even within the European tradition . Much modern poetry avoids traditional rhyme schemes . Classical Greek and Latin poetry did not use rhyme . Rhyme entered European poetry in the High Middle Ages , in part under the influence of the Arabic language in Al Andalus (modern Spain) . Arabic language poets used rhyme extensively from the first development of literary Arabic in the sixth century , as in their long , rhyming qasidas . Some rhyming schemes have become associated with a specific language , culture or period , while other rhyming schemes have achieved use across languages , cultures or time periods . Some forms of poetry carry a consistent and well @-@ defined rhyming scheme , such as the chant royal or the rubaiyat , while other poetic forms have variable rhyme schemes .

Most rhyme schemes are described using letters that correspond to sets of rhymes , so if the first , second and fourth lines of a quatrain rhyme with each other and the third line does not rhyme , the quatrain is said to have an " a @-@ a @-@ b @-@ a " rhyme scheme . This rhyme scheme is the

one used , for example , in the rubaiyat form . Similarly , an " a @-@ b @-@ b @-@ a " quatrain (what is known as " enclosed rhyme ") is used in such forms as the Petrarchan sonnet . Some types of more complicated rhyming schemes have developed names of their own , separate from the " a @-@ b @-@ c " convention , such as the ottava rima and terza rima . The types and use of differing rhyming schemes is discussed further in the main article .

= = = Form = = =

Poetic form is more flexible in modernist and post @-@ modernist poetry , and continues to be less structured than in previous literary eras . Many modern poets eschew recognisable structures or forms , and write in free verse . But poetry remains distinguished from prose by its form ; some regard for basic formal structures of poetry will be found in even the best free verse , however much such structures may appear to have been ignored . Similarly , in the best poetry written in classic styles there will be departures from strict form for emphasis or effect .

Among major structural elements used in poetry are the line , the stanza or verse paragraph , and larger combinations of stanzas or lines such as cantos . Also sometimes used are broader visual presentations of words and calligraphy . These basic units of poetic form are often combined into larger structures , called poetic forms or poetic modes (see following section) , as in the sonnet or haiku .

= = = Lines and stanzas = = =

Poetry is often separated into lines on a page . These lines may be based on the number of metrical feet , or may emphasize a rhyming pattern at the ends of lines . Lines may serve other functions , particularly where the poem is not written in a formal metrical pattern . Lines can separate , compare or contrast thoughts expressed in different units , or can highlight a change in tone . See the article on line breaks for information about the division between lines .

Lines of poems are often organized into stanzas , which are denominated by the number of lines included . Thus a collection of two lines is a couplet (or distich) , three lines a triplet (or tercet) , four lines a quatrain , and so on . These lines may or may not relate to each other by rhyme or rhythm . For example , a couplet may be two lines with identical meters which rhyme or two lines held together by a common meter alone .

Other poems may be organized into verse paragraphs , in which regular rhymes with established rhythms are not used , but the poetic tone is instead established by a collection of rhythms , alliterations , and rhymes established in paragraph form . Many medieval poems were written in verse paragraphs , even where regular rhymes and rhythms were used .

In many forms of poetry , stanzas are interlocking , so that the rhyming scheme or other structural elements of one stanza determine those of succeeding stanzas . Examples of such interlocking stanzas include , for example , the ghazal and the villanelle , where a refrain (or , in the case of the villanelle , refrains) is established in the first stanza which then repeats in subsequent stanzas . Related to the use of interlocking stanzas is their use to separate thematic parts of a poem . For example , the strophe , antistrophe and epode of the ode form are often separated into one or more stanzas .

In some cases , particularly lengthier formal poetry such as some forms of epic poetry , stanzas themselves are constructed according to strict rules and then combined . In skaldic poetry , the dróttkvætt stanza had eight lines , each having three " lifts " produced with alliteration or assonance . In addition to two or three alliterations , the odd numbered lines had partial rhyme of consonants with dissimilar vowels , not necessarily at the beginning of the word ; the even lines contained internal rhyme in set syllables (not necessarily at the end of the word) . Each half @-@ line had exactly six syllables , and each line ended in a trochee . The arrangement of dróttkvætts followed far less rigid rules than the construction of the individual dróttkvætts .

= = = Visual presentation = = =

Even before the advent of printing , the visual appearance of poetry often added meaning or depth . Acrostic poems conveyed meanings in the initial letters of lines or in letters at other specific places in a poem . In Arabic , Hebrew and Chinese poetry , the visual presentation of finely calligraphed poems has played an important part in the overall effect of many poems .

With the advent of printing , poets gained greater control over the mass @-@ produced visual presentations of their work . Visual elements have become an important part of the poet 's toolbox , and many poets have sought to use visual presentation for a wide range of purposes . Some Modernist poets have made the placement of individual lines or groups of lines on the page an integral part of the poem 's composition . At times , this complements the poem 's rhythm through visual caesuras of various lengths , or creates juxtapositions so as to accentuate meaning , ambiguity or irony , or simply to create an aesthetically pleasing form . In its most extreme form , this can lead to concrete poetry or asemic writing .

= = = Diction = = =

Poetic diction treats the manner in which language is used , and refers not only to the sound but also to the underlying meaning and its interaction with sound and form . Many languages and poetic forms have very specific poetic dictions , to the point where distinct grammars and dialects are used specifically for poetry . Registers in poetry can range from strict employment of ordinary speech patterns , as favoured in much late @-@ 20th @-@ century prosody , through to highly ornate uses of language , as in medieval and Renaissance poetry .

Poetic diction can include rhetorical devices such as simile and metaphor , as well as tones of voice , such as irony . Aristotle wrote in the Poetics that " the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor . " Since the rise of Modernism , some poets have opted for a poetic diction that de @-@ emphasizes rhetorical devices , attempting instead the direct presentation of things and experiences and the exploration of tone . On the other hand , Surrealists have pushed rhetorical devices to their limits , making frequent use of catachresis .

Allegorical stories are central to the poetic diction of many cultures , and were prominent in the West during classical times , the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance . Aesop 's Fables , repeatedly rendered in both verse and prose since first being recorded about 500 B.C. , are perhaps the richest single source of allegorical poetry through the ages . Other notables examples include the Roman de la Rose , a 13th @-@ century French poem , William Langland 's Piers Ploughman in the 14th century , and Jean de la Fontaine 's Fables (influenced by Aesop 's) in the 17th century . Rather than being fully allegorical , however , a poem may contain symbols or allusions that deepen the meaning or effect of its words without constructing a full allegory .

Another element of poetic diction can be the use of vivid imagery for effect . The juxtaposition of unexpected or impossible images is , for example , a particularly strong element in surrealist poetry and haiku . Vivid images are often endowed with symbolism or metaphor . Many poetic dictions use repetitive phrases for effect , either a short phrase (such as Homer 's " rosy @-@ fingered dawn " or " the wine @-@ dark sea ") or a longer refrain . Such repetition can add a sombre tone to a poem , or can be laced with irony as the context of the words changes .

= = Forms = =

Specific poetic forms have been developed by many cultures . In more developed , closed or " received " poetic forms , the rhyming scheme , meter and other elements of a poem are based on sets of rules , ranging from the relatively loose rules that govern the construction of an elegy to the highly formalized structure of the ghazal or villanelle . Described below are some common forms of poetry widely used across a number of languages . Additional forms of poetry may be found in the discussions of poetry of particular cultures or periods and in the glossary .

= = = Sonnet = = =

Among the most common forms of poetry , popular from the Late Middle Ages on , is the sonnet , which by the 13th century had become standardized as fourteen lines following a set rhyme scheme and logical structure . By the 14th century and the Italian Renaissance , the form had further crystallized under the pen of Petrarch , whose sonnets were translated in the 16th century by Sir Thomas Wyatt , who is credited with introducing the sonnet form into English literature . A traditional Italian or Petrarchan sonnet follows the rhyme scheme abba , abba , cdecde , though some variation , especially within the final six lines (or sestet) , is common . The English (or Shakespearean) sonnet follows the rhyme scheme abab , cdcd , efef , gg , introducing a third quatrain (grouping of four lines) , a final couplet , and a greater amount of variety with regard to rhyme than is usually found in its Italian predecessors . By convention , sonnets in English typically use iambic pentameter , while in the Romance languages , the hendecasyllable and Alexandrine are the most widely used meters .

Sonnets of all types often make use of a volta , or " turn , " a point in the poem at which an idea is turned on its head , a question is answered (or introduced) , or the subject matter is further complicated . This volta can often take the form of a " but " statement contradicting or complicating the content of the earlier lines . In the Petrarchan sonnet , the turn tends to fall around the division between the first two quatrains and the sestet , while English sonnets usually place it at or near the beginning of the closing couplet .

Sonnets are particularly associated with high poetic diction , vivid imagery , and romantic love , largely due to the influence of Petrarch as well as of early English practitioners such as Edmund Spenser (who gave his name to the Spenserian sonnet) , Michael Drayton , and Shakespeare , whose sonnets are among the most famous in English poetry , with twenty being included in the Oxford Book of English Verse . However , the twists and turns associated with the volta allow for a logical flexibility applicable to many subjects . Poets from the earliest centuries of the sonnet to the present have utilized the form to address topics related to politics (John Milton , Percy Bysshe Shelley , Claude McKay) , theology (John Donne , Gerard Manley Hopkins) , war (Wilfred Owen , e. e. cummings) , and gender and sexuality (Carol Ann Duffy) . Further , postmodern authors such as Ted Berrigan and John Berryman have challenged the traditional definitions of the sonnet form , rendering entire sequences of " sonnets " that often lack rhyme , a clear logical progression , or even a consistent count of fourteen lines .

== = Shi == =

Shi (simplified Chinese : 诗 ; traditional Chinese : 詩 ; pinyin : shī ; Wade ? Giles : shih) Is the main type of Classical Chinese poetry . Within this form of poetry the most important variations are " folk song " styled verse (yuefu) , " old style " verse (gushi) , " modern style " verse (jintishi) . In all cases , rhyming is obligatory . The Yuefu is a folk ballad or a poem written in the folk ballad style , and the number of lines and the length of the lines could be irregular . For the other variations of shi poetry , generally either a four line (quatrain , or jueju) or else an eight line poem is normal ; either way with the even numbered lines rhyming . The line length is scanned by according number of characters (according to the convention that one character equals one syllable) , and are predominantly either five or seven characters long , with a caesura before the final three syllables . The lines are generally end @-@ stopped , considered as a series of couplets , and exhibit verbal parallelism as a key poetic device . The " old style " verse (gushi) is less formally strict than the jintishi , or regulated verse , which , despite the name " new style " verse actually had its theoretical basis laid as far back to Shen Yue , in the 5th or 6th century , although not considered to have reached its full development until the time of Chen Zi 'ang (661 ? 702) A good example of a poet known for his gushi poems is Li Bai . Among its other rules , the jintishi rules regulate the tonal variations within a poem , including the use of set patterns of the four tones of Middle Chinese The basic form of jintishi (lushi) has eight lines in four couplets , with parallelism between the lines in the second and third couplets . The couplets with parallel lines contain contrasting content but an identical grammatical relationship between words . Jintishi often have a rich poetic diction , full of

allusion , and can have a wide range of subject , including history and politics . One of the masters of the form was Du Fu , who wrote during the Tang Dynasty (8th century) .

= = = Villanelle = = =

The villanelle is a nineteen @-@ line poem made up of five triplets with a closing quatrain ; the poem is characterized by having two refrains , initially used in the first and third lines of the first stanza , and then alternately used at the close of each subsequent stanza until the final quatrain , which is concluded by the two refrains . The remaining lines of the poem have an a @-@ b alternating rhyme . The villanelle has been used regularly in the English language since the late 19th century by such poets as Dylan Thomas , W. H. Auden , and Elizabeth Bishop .

= = = Tanka = = =

Tanka is a form of unrhymed Japanese poetry , with five sections totalling 31 onji (phonological units identical to morae) , structured in a 5 @-@ 7 @-@ 5 @-@ 7 @-@ 7 pattern . There is generally a shift in tone and subject matter between the upper 5 @-@ 7 @-@ 5 phrase and the lower 7 @-@ 7 phrase . Tanka were written as early as the Asuka period by such poets as Kakinomoto no Hitomaro , at a time when Japan was emerging from a period where much of its poetry followed Chinese form . Tanka was originally the shorter form of Japanese formal poetry (which was generally referred to as " waka ") , and was used more heavily to explore personal rather than public themes . By the tenth century , tanka had become the dominant form of Japanese poetry , to the point where the originally general term waka (" Japanese poetry ") came to be used exclusively for tanka . Tanka are still widely written today .

= = = Haiku = = =

Haiku is a popular form of unrhymed Japanese poetry , which evolved in the 17th century from the hokku , or opening verse of a renku . Generally written in a single vertical line , the haiku contains three sections totalling 17 onji , structured in a 5 @-@ 7 @-@ 5 pattern . Traditionally , haiku contain a kireji , or cutting word , usually placed at the end of one of the poem 's three sections , and a kigo , or season @-@ word . The most famous exponent of the haiku was Matsuo Basho (1644 ? 1694) . An example of his writing :

???????????????

fuji no kaze ya oogi ni nosete Edo miyage
the wind of Mt . Fuji
I 've brought on my fan !
a gift from Edo

= = = Ode = = =

Odes were first developed by poets writing in ancient Greek , such as Pindar , and Latin , such as Horace . Forms of odes appear in many of the cultures that were influenced by the Greeks and Latins . The ode generally has three parts : a strophe , an antistrophe , and an epode . The antistrophes of the ode possess similar metrical structures and , depending on the tradition , similar rhyme structures . In contrast , the epode is written with a different scheme and structure . Odes have a formal poetic diction , and generally deal with a serious subject . The strophe and antistrophe look at the subject from different , often conflicting , perspectives , with the epode moving to a higher level to either view or resolve the underlying issues . Odes are often intended to be recited or sung by two choruses (or individuals) , with the first reciting the strophe , the second the antistrophe , and both together the epode . Over time , differing forms for odes have developed with considerable variations in form and structure , but generally showing the original influence of the Pindaric or Horatian ode . One non @-@ Western form which resembles the ode is the qasida in Persian poetry

= = = Ghazal = = =

The ghazal (also ghazel , gazel , gazal , or gozol) is a form of poetry common in Arabic , Persian , Turkish , Azerbaijani , Urdu and Bengali poetry . In classic form , the ghazal has from five to fifteen rhyming couplets that share a refrain at the end of the second line . This refrain may be of one or several syllables , and is preceded by a rhyme . Each line has an identical meter . The ghazal often reflects on a theme of unattainable love or divinity .

As with other forms with a long history in many languages , many variations have been developed , including forms with a quasi @-@ musical poetic diction in Urdu . Ghazals have a classical affinity with Sufism , and a number of major Sufi religious works are written in ghazal form . The relatively steady meter and the use of the refrain produce an incantatory effect , which complements Sufi mystical themes well . Among the masters of the form is Rumi , a 13th @-@ century Persian poet . One of the most famous poet in this type of poetry is Hafez . Themes of his Ghazal is exposing hypocrisy . His life and poems have been the subject of much analysis , commentary and interpretation , influencing post @-@ fourteenth century Persian writing more than any other author . West @-@ östlicher Diwan of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that is a collection of lyrical poems , has been inspired by the Persian poet Hafez .

= = Genres = =

In addition to specific forms of poems , poetry is often thought of in terms of different genres and subgenres . A poetic genre is generally a tradition or classification of poetry based on the subject matter , style , or other broader literary characteristics . Some commentators view genres as natural forms of literature . Others view the study of genres as the study of how different works relate and refer to other works .

= = = Narrative poetry = = =

Narrative poetry is a genre of poetry that tells a story . Broadly it subsumes epic poetry , but the term " narrative poetry " is often reserved for smaller works , generally with more appeal to human interest . Narrative poetry may be the oldest type of poetry . Many scholars of Homer have concluded that his Iliad and Odyssey were composed from compilations of shorter narrative poems that related individual episodes . Much narrative poetry ? such as Scottish and English ballads , and Baltic and Slavic heroic poems ? is performance poetry with roots in a preliterate oral tradition . It has been speculated that some features that distinguish poetry from prose , such as meter , alliteration and kennings , once served as memory aids for bards who recited traditional tales .

Notable narrative poets have included Ovid , Dante , Juan Ruiz , Chaucer , William Langland , Luís de Camões , Shakespeare , Alexander Pope , Robert Burns , Fernando de Rojas , Adam Mickiewicz , Alexander Pushkin , Edgar Allan Poe and Alfred Tennyson .

= = = Epic poetry = = =

Epic poetry is a genre of poetry , and a major form of narrative literature . This genre is often defined as lengthy poems concerning events of a heroic or important nature to the culture of the time . It recounts , in a continuous narrative , the life and works of a heroic or mythological person or group of persons . Examples of epic poems are Homer 's Iliad and Odyssey , Virgil 's Aeneid , the Nibelungenlied , Luís de Camões ' Os Lusíadas , the Cantar de Mio Cid , the Epic of Gilgamesh , the Mahabharata , Valmiki 's Ramayana , Ferdowsi 's Shahnama , Nizami (or Nezami) 's Khamse (Five Books) , and the Epic of King Gesar . While the composition of epic poetry , and of long poems generally , became less common in the west after the early 20th century , some notable epics have continued to be written . Derek Walcott won a Nobel prize to a great extent on the basis

of his epic , Omeros .

=== Dramatic poetry ===

Dramatic poetry is drama written in verse to be spoken or sung , and appears in varying , sometimes related forms in many cultures . Greek tragedy in verse dates to the 6th century B.C. , and may have been an influence on the development of Sanskrit drama , just as Indian drama in turn appears to have influenced the development of the bianwen verse dramas in China , forerunners of Chinese Opera . East Asian verse dramas also include Japanese Noh . Examples of dramatic poetry in Persian literature include Nizami 's two famous dramatic works , Layla and Majnun and Khosrow and Shirin , Ferdowsi 's tragedies such as Rostam and Sohrab , Rumi 's Masnavi , Gorgani 's tragedy of Vis and Ramin , and Vahshi 's tragedy of Farhad .

=== Satirical poetry ===

Poetry can be a powerful vehicle for satire . The Romans had a strong tradition of satirical poetry , often written for political purposes . A notable example is the Roman poet Juvenal 's satires .

The same is true of the English satirical tradition . John Dryden (a Tory) , the first Poet Laureate , produced in 1682 Mac Flecknoe , subtitled " A Satire on the True Blue Protestant Poet , T.S. " (a reference to Thomas Shadwell) . Another master of 17th @-@ century English satirical poetry was John Wilmot , 2nd Earl of Rochester . Satirical poets outside England include Poland 's Ignacy Krasicki , Azerbaijan 's Sabir and Portugal 's Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage .

=== Light poetry ===

Light poetry , or light verse , is poetry that attempts to be humorous . Poems considered " light " are usually brief , and can be on a frivolous or serious subject , and often feature word play , including puns , adventurous rhyme and heavy alliteration . Although a few free verse poets have excelled at light verse outside the formal verse tradition , light verse in English is usually formal . Common forms include the limerick , the clerihew , and the double dactyl .

While light poetry is sometimes condemned as doggerel , or thought of as poetry composed casually , humor often makes a serious point in a subtle or subversive way . Many of the most renowned " serious " poets have also excelled at light verse . Notable writers of light poetry include Lewis Carroll , Ogden Nash , X. J. Kennedy , Willard R. Espy , and Wendy Cope .

=== Lyric poetry ===

Lyric poetry is a genre that , unlike epic and dramatic poetry , does not attempt to tell a story but instead is of a more personal nature. Poems in this genre tend to be shorter , melodic , and contemplative . Rather than depicting characters and actions , it portrays the poet 's own feelings , states of mind , and perceptions . Notable poets in this genre include John Donne , Gerard Manley Hopkins , and Antonio Machado .

=== Elegy ===

An elegy is a mournful , melancholy or plaintive poem , especially a lament for the dead or a funeral song . The term " elegy , " which originally denoted a type of poetic meter (elegiac meter) , commonly describes a poem of mourning . An elegy may also reflect something that seems to the author to be strange or mysterious . The elegy , as a reflection on a death , on a sorrow more generally , or on something mysterious , may be classified as a form of lyric poetry .

Notable practitioners of elegiac poetry have included Propertius , Jorge Manrique , Jan Kochanowski , Chidiock Tichborne , Edmund Spenser , Ben Jonson , John Milton , Thomas Gray , Charlotte Turner Smith , William Cullen Bryant , Percy Bysshe Shelley , Johann Wolfgang von

Goethe , Evgeny Baratynsky , Alfred Tennyson , Walt Whitman , Louis Gallet , Antonio Machado , Juan Ramón Jiménez , Giannina Braschi , William Butler Yeats , Rainer Maria Rilke , and Virginia Woolf .

=== Verse fable ===

The fable is an ancient literary genre , often (though not invariably) set in verse . It is a succinct story that features anthropomorphized animals , plants , inanimate objects , or forces of nature that illustrate a moral lesson (a " moral ") . Verse fables have used a variety of meter and rhyme patterns .

Notable verse fabulists have included Aesop , Vishnu Sarma , Phaedrus , Marie de France , Robert Henryson , Biernat of Lublin , Jean de La Fontaine , Ignacy Krasicki , Félix María de Samaniego , Tomás de Iriarte , Ivan Krylov and Ambrose Bierce .

=== Prose poetry ===

Prose poetry is a hybrid genre that shows attributes of both prose and poetry . It may be indistinguishable from the micro @-@ story (a.k.a. the " short short story " , " flash fiction ") . While some examples of earlier prose strike modern readers as poetic , prose poetry is commonly regarded as having originated in 19th @-@ century France , where its practitioners included Aloysius Bertrand , Charles Baudelaire , Arthur Rimbaud and Stéphane Mallarmé . Since the late 1980s especially , prose poetry has gained increasing popularity , with entire journals , such as The Prose Poem : An International Journal , Contemporary Haibun Online , and Haibun Today devoted to that genre and its hybrids . Latin American poets of the 20th century who wrote prose poems include Octavio Paz and Giannina Braschi

=== Speculative poetry ===

Speculative poetry , also known as fantastic poetry , (of which weird or macabre poetry is a major subclassification) , is a poetic genre which deals thematically with subjects which are ' beyond reality ' , whether via extrapolation as in science fiction or via weird and horrific themes as in horror fiction . Such poetry appears regularly in modern science fiction and horror fiction magazines . Edgar Allan Poe is sometimes seen as the " father of speculative poetry " .

=== Anthologies ===

Ferguson , Margaret ; Salter , Mary Jo ; Stallworthy , Jon , eds . (1996) . The Norton Anthology of Poetry (4th ed .) . W. W. Norton & Co . ISBN 0 @-@ 393 @-@ 96820 @-@ 0 .

Gardner , Helen , ed . (1972) . New Oxford Book of English Verse 1250 ? 1950 . Oxford University Press . ISBN 0 @-@ 19 @-@ 812136 @-@ 9 .

Larkin , Philip , ed . (1973) . The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse . Oxford University Press .

Yeats , WB , ed . (1936) . Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892 ? 1935 . Oxford University Press .