

## IB Glossary of Poetic Terms, Tropes and Figures: THE SONNET

**Section ONE: THE SONNET - -** A fourteen-line poem in iambic pentameter. It comes in three standard forms.

A. The **Shakespearean or English sonnet** : A variant of the English sonnet, named after William Shakespeare

**Arrangement:** three quatrains and a final couplet.

**Rhyme scheme:** abab, cdcd, efef, gg

**Variation:** no variation, ever

The poem usually offers a conceit or question that needs to be pondered or addressed. The couplet generally introduced an unexpected sharp thematic or imagistic “**turn**” or **VOLTA in line 9 or line 13**. The form is often named after Shakespeare, not because he was the first to write in this form but because he became its most famous practitioner. This example, Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116, illustrates the form:

<i>Let me not to the marriage of true minds (a) Admit impediments. Love is not love (b) Which alters when it alteration finds, (a) Or bends with the remover to remove. (b)</i>	Q1 (quatrain 1)
<i>O no, it is an ever fixed mark (c) That looks on tempests and is never shaken; (d) It is the star to every wand'ring barque, (c) Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken. (d)</i>	Q2 (quatrain 2)
<i>Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks (e) Within his bending sickle's compass come; (f) Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, (e) But bears it out even to the edge of doom. (f)</i>	Q3 (quatrain 3)
<i>If this be error and upon me proved, (g) I never writ, nor no man ever loved. (g)</i>	couplet (rhyming)

B. The **Petrarchan or Italian sonnet** , A variant of the Italian sonnet, named after Francesco Petrarca

**Arrangement:** divides into two parts: an eight-line octave and a six-line sestet.

**Rhyme Scheme:** abba abba cde cde or abba abba cd cd cd

**Variation:** abba, abba- never varies; the sestet can vary in rhyme scheme dramatically within the cde framework

The first known sonnets in English, written by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, used this Italian scheme, as did sonnets by later English poets including John Milton, Thomas Gray, William Wordsworth and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. This example, On His Being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three by John Milton, gives a sense of the Italian Form:

<i>How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth, (a) Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year! (b) My hasting days fly on with full career, (b) But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th. (a) Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth, (a) That I to manhood am arrived so near, (b) And inward ripeness doth much less appear, (b) That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th. (a)</i>	OCTAVE
<i>Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow, (c) It shall be still in strictest measure even (d) To that same lot, however mean or high, (e) Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven. (d) All is, if I have grace to use it so, (c) As ever in my great Task-master's eye. (e)</i>	SESTET (two tercets)

C. The **Spenserian sonnet** : A variant on the English sonnet, named after William Spenser.

**Arrangement:** 14-lines divided into 8-line octave and 6-line sestet , alternating rhymes, picking up from the previous line (abab bcbc cdcd ee)

**Rhyme scheme:** a-b-a-b, b-c-b-c, c-d-c-d, e-e

**Variation:** never varies because of the interlocking forms.

In a Spenserian sonnet there does not appear to be a requirement that the initial octave sets up a problem which the closing sestet answers as is the case with a Petrarchian sonnet. Instead, the form is treated as three quatrains connected by the interlocking rhyme scheme and followed by a couplet. The linked rhymes of his quatrains suggest the linked rhymes of such Italian forms as *terza rima*. This example is taken from Amoretti:

Happy ye leaves! whenas those lily hands, (a)  
Which hold my life in their dead doing might, (b)  
Shall handle you, and hold in love's soft bands, (a)  
Like captives trembling at the victor's sight. (b)

The two stanzas work together as an OCTAVE, even though they are arranged like quatrains.

And happy lines! on which, with starry light, (b)  
Those laming eyes will deign sometimes to look, (c)  
And read the sorrows of my dying sprite, (b)  
Written with tears in heart's close bleeding book. (c)

And happy rhymes! bathed in the sacred brook (c)  
Of Helicon, whence she derived is, (d)  
When ye behold that angel's blessed look, (c)  
My soul's long lacked food, my heaven's bliss. (d)

These six lines work together as a SESTET

Leaves, lines, and rhymes seek her to please alone, (e)  
Whom if ye please, I care for other none. (e)

## SONNET POWER TERMS & TROPES!!!!

**Caesura:** From the Latin word *caedere* to "to cut", a caesura represents a pause in the sense or order of the words. Caesurae always occur between two words, one at the end and one at the beginning of a clause. Depending on where the caesura occurs, it may be described as strong or weak. In dactylic hexameter, the main caesura usually occurs in the third foot. Poets can also employ a caesura, use run-on lines and vary the degrees of accent by skillful word selection to modify the rhythmic pattern, a process called **modulation**. Accents heightened by semantic emphasis also provide diversity.

**Enjambment** From the French *enjamber* or *enjambement*: "running on or running over." The continuation of a complete idea (a sentence or clause) from one line or couplet of a poem to the next line or couplet without a pause. The reader must read through the line ending in order to determine the sense of a phrase or clause. An example of enjambment can be found in the first line of Joyce Kilmer's poem *Trees*: "I think that I shall never see/A poem as lovely as a tree." *Enjambment* comes from the French word for "to straddle."

**Syncope:** A form of elision involving the suppression or omission of a sound from the middle of a word, such as *ta'en* for taken, *o'er* for over, *mem'ry* for memory.

**Conceit** A fanciful poetic image or metaphor that likens one thing to something else that is seemingly very different. An example of a conceit can be found in Shakespeare's sonnet "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" and in Emily Dickinson's poem "There is no frigate like a book."

**Turn.** The turn is a part of the sonnet. A sonnet can be thematically divided into two sections: the first presents the theme, raises an issue or doubt, and the second part answers the question, resolves the problem, or drives home the poem's point. This change in the poem is called the turn and helps move forward the emotional action of the poem quickly, as fourteen lines can become too short too fast.

**Volta:** Also called a **turn**, a volta is a sudden change in thought, direction, or emotion near the conclusion of a sonnet. This invisible volta is then followed by a **couplet** (in English sonnets) or a **sestet** (in Italian sonnets). Typically, the first section of the sonnet states a premise, asks a question, or suggests a theme. The concluding lines after the volta resolve the problem by suggesting an answer, offering a conclusion, or shifting the thematic concerns in a new direction.

**Heroic couplet** A stanza composed of two rhymed lines in iambic pentameter. Today we associate heroic couplets with carefully crafted verse on heroic or epic subjects. It can be misleading to use this phrase without knowledge.

### Octave

An eight-line unit, which may constitute a stanza; or a section of a poem, as in the octave of a sonnet.

**Sestet** A six-line unit of verse constituting a stanza or section of a poem; the last six lines of an Italian sonnet. Examples: Petrarch's "If it is not love, then what is it that I feel," and Frost's "Design."

### Tercet

A three-line stanza, as the stanzas in Frost's "Acquainted With the Night" and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind." The three-line stanzas or sections that together constitute the sestet of a Petrarchan or Italian sonnet.

## Section TWO: POETRY WORLD : IB-Level Terms, Tropes, Figures:

**Prosody** The study of versification in general, including meter, rhyme and stanza and at times alliteration and onomatopoeia.

**Scansion** The act of determining and graphically representing the metrical character of a line of verse, determining the rhythms of poetry by dividing the lines into feet, marking the stressed and unstressed syllables, and counting the syllables.

**Explication** The process of making something clearer. In literature, explication is the close reading of a poem or passage in order to talk about the meaning, diction, line, stanza and form structure, meter, rhythm and imagery.

**Register** A term designating the appropriateness of a given style to a given situation. Speakers and writers in specific situations deploy, for example, a technical vocabulary (e.g. scientific, medical, legal, theological, psychological), as well as other aspects of style customarily used in that situation. Literary effect is often created by switching register.

**Verse** As a mass noun, poetry in general; as a regular noun, a line of poetry. Typically used to refer to poetry that possesses more formal qualities.

### SCHOOL OF METER

The measured pattern of rhythmic accents in poems. Poetry is organized into lines, which consist of feet. A foot is a fixed arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables. The most common types of feet can be divided into those that are *binary* or *disyllabic* (consisting of two syllables) and those that are *ternary* or *trisyllabic* (consisting of three syllables). Because there are two syllables in a disyllabic foot, there are two principal types of binary meter, depending on which of the two syllables is stressed. These are:

**Iamb: (i — AM!)** When the second syllable is stressed and the first is not, the foot is called an *iamb*. The following lines from "Come live with me and be my love" (Christopher Marlowe) consists of four iambs. Here are the lines with vertical bars dividing the feet and the stressed syllables highlighted:

Come **live** | with **me** | and **be** | my **love**  
And **we** | will **all** | the **plea**sures **prove**

Note that the division of a line into feet is independent of the division into words. Thus, the two syllables of the word "pleasures" in the last line belong to different metrical feet: the first syllable of the word is the second syllable of the third iamb in the line and the second syllable of the word is the first syllable of the fourth iamb.

**Trochee (TRO — key)** When the first syllable is stressed and the second is not, the foot is called a *trochee*. (FOOT-ball) An easy way to remember the trochee is to memorize the first line of a lighthearted poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which demonstrates the use of various kinds of metrical feet: "**Trochee/ trips** from/ **long to/ short.**" (The stressed syllables are in bold.) The trochee is the reverse of the iamb. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "[Song of Hiawatha](#)" is written in trochees; here's an example of the best-known section, with vertical bars dividing the feet and the stressed syllables highlighted. Each line consists of four trochees.

By the | shores of | Gitche | Gumee,   OR   Double, double, toil and trouble  
By the | shining | Big-Sea-|Water

**Dactyl (DACK — til — ick)** A metrical foot of three syllables, one long (or stressed) followed by two short (or unstressed), as in *happily*. The dactyl is the reverse of the anapest. Here's an example from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "[Evangeline](#)" of dactylic hexameter, or six dactylic feet per line, with vertical lines dividing the feet and the stressed syllables highlighted:

**This** is the | **forest** pri | **me**val. The | **murmuring** | **pin**es and the | **hem**locks ...

Note that the last foot of this line is missing its last syllable. This omission of a trailing unstressed syllable is common in poetry; it is called **catalexis**, and lines where catalexis occurs are called *catalectic*. Catalexis is common in trochaic lines as well as in dactylic ones; the Pushkin fairy-tale poems that you read are trochaic, but with frequent catalexis.

**Anapest (ann — ah — PEST)** The last of the three syllables in the foot is stressed. Here's an example from Lord Byron's "[The Destruction of Sennacherib](#)" of anapest tetrameter, or four anapest feet per line, with vertical lines dividing the feet and the stressed syllables highlighted:

The Assy | rian came **down** | like a **wolf** | on the **fold**  
And his **co** | horts were **glea** | ming in **pur** | ple and **gold**

**Spondee**           A metrical foot represented by two stressed syllables, such as KNICK-KNACK.

**Pyrrhic: Avoiding sing-song cadences (PEER — ICK)** Poetry in which every stress appears in its place can take on a tedious sing-song quality, and poets avoid that problem by introducing small variations into the meter of individual lines. A particularly common variation is the replacement of an individual iamb or trochee with a *pyrrhic*, a disyllabic foot in which neither syllable is stressed (or, at least, in which neither syllable is stressed very strongly). The following line from William Shakespeare's [Richard III](#) is iambic, but with one pyrrhic substitution:

A horse! | a horse! | my king | dom for | a horse!

If you read this line naturally, as if it were prose, the preposition “for” would have no (or almost no) stress. The line thus consists of five two-syllable feet, all of which are iambs except the fourth, which is a pyrrhic. The line overall is felt to be iambic because of the overwhelming general iambic cadence, but sporadic pyrrhic substitutions here and elsewhere save that cadence from a relentless thumping and clunking that would distract from the natural rhythm of the language.

\*\* Spondaic and Pyrrhic meter are never used as the sole meter of a poem, because it would sound as if nails were being hit into a board. But, inserted now and then, they can lend emphasis and variety to a line of meter. (And the WHITE BREAST of the DIM SEA.)

**Falling meter** Poetic meters such as trochaic and dactylic that move or fall from a stressed (heavy) to an unstressed (lighter) syllable. The nonsense line, "Higgledy, piggledy," is dactylic, with the accent on the first syllable and the two syllables following falling off from that accent in each word. Trochaic meter is represented by this line: "Hip-hop, be-bop, treetop--freedom."

**Rising meter** Poetic meters such as iambic and anapestic that move or ascend from an unstressed to a stressed syllable. See Anapest, Iamb, and Falling meter.

**Foot** A metrical unit composed of stressed and unstressed syllables. For example, an iamb or iambic foot is represented by “”, that is, an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one. Frost’s line "Whose woods these are I think I know" contains four iambs, and is thus an iambic foot.

**Line** Syllabotonic poetry is organized not only by the arrangement of stresses in the line, but also by the number of feet in the line. For example, a line that consists entirely of five iambs is called iambic pentameter (the Greek root *pent-* means ‘five’).

- **Dimeter:** two feet
- **Trimeter:** three feet
- **Tetrameter:** four feet
- **Pentameter:** five feet
- **Hexameter:** six feet
- **Heptameter:** seven feet

As was noted in the discussion of the word “pleasures” in “Come live with me and be my love” above, meter is identified on the level of the **line**, not on the level of the **word**, which is to say that foot boundaries are independent of word boundaries. When we describe the meter of a poem, we describe the meter of the line, rather than the meter individual words would have in isolation.

**Accentual-Syllabic verse** Verse whose meter is determined by the number and alternation of its stressed and unstressed syllables, organized into feet. From line to line, the number of stresses or accents may vary, but the total number of syllables within each line is fixed. The majority of English poems from the Renaissance to the 19th century are written according to this metric system.

**Amphibrach** The middle of the three syllables in the foot is stressed. Here’s an example from Dr. Seuss’s, “If I Ran the Circus” of amphibrach tetrameter with vertical lines dividing the feet and the stressed syllables highlighted:

*And NOW comes| an act of| Enormous| Enormance!  
No former| performer’s| performed this| performance!*

**Hyperbaton:** separation of words which belong together, often to emphasize the first of the separated words or to create a certain image.

**Metonymy** A figure of speech in which one word is substituted for another with which it is closely associated. For example, in the expression *The pen is mightier than the sword*, the word *pen* is used for “the written word,” and *sword* is used for “military power.”

**Elision** The contraction, for metrical purposes, of two syllables into one or the slurring away of a syllable in order to preserve the meter and syllable count. The process may be as follows:

two vowels sitting side by side: tu•mul•chwus instead of tu•mul•choo•us

two vowels facing each other across a gap between words: Th’expense for The Expense

omission of a vowel, consonant or syllable: consid’rate for considerate

## SCHOOL OF RHYME

**Rhyme:** When two or more words or phrases contain an identical or similar vowel-sound, and the consonant-sounds that follow are identical or similar (red and dead).

- a) **Feminine rhyme** occurs when two syllables are rhymed ('mother | brother') (ages | pages) (pleasure | leisure).
- b) **Masculine rhyme** A rhyme that occurs in a final stressed syllable: *cat/hat, desire/fire, observe/deserve*.
- c) **Half-rhyme** occurs when the final consonants are the same but the preceding vowels are not. ('love | have').
- d) **Eye rhyme** occurs when two syllables look the same but are pronounced differently ('kind | wind' - although sometimes changes in pronunciation have made what were formerly perfect rhymes become eye rhymes).
- e) **Rime riche** occurs when the same combination of sounds is used in each element of the rhyme, but where the two identical sounding words have different senses ('maid | made'). This was in the medieval period regarded as a particularly perfect form of rhyme.
- f) **Leonine rhyme** occurs when the syllable immediately preceding the **caesura** rhymes with the syllable at the end of the line.
- g) **Partial rhyme:** Also called off-rhyme, slant-rhyme, near-rhyme. Rhyme that is by conventional standards incomplete. Generally, the consonants match by not vowels, or vice versa. Example: ring/bubbling, or prefer/father
- h) **Internal rhyme** is the rhyming of words within one line of poetry. (There are strange things done in the midnight sun)

**Rhyme Scheme** A regularly recurring pattern of rhyme within a poem or stanza. It is recorded by using a letter of the alphabet to denote each rhyme, and noting the order in which the rhymes recur (aabbcc... is the most simply rhyme scheme of all, that of the couplet).

**Free verse** Poetry without a regular pattern of meter or rhyme. The verse is "free" in not being bound by earlier poetic conventions requiring poems to adhere to an explicit and identifiable meter and rhyme scheme in a form such as the sonnet or ballad. Modern and contemporary poets of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries often employ free verse. Williams's "This Is Just to Say" is one of many examples.

## SCHOOL OF FORM

**Lyric** A poem, such as a sonnet or an ode, that expresses the thoughts and feelings of the poet. A lyric poem may resemble a song in form or style. Characterized by brevity, compression, and the expression of feeling, a lyric poem shows intense emotion. The anonymous "Western Wind" epitomizes the genre:

*Western wind, when will thou blow,  
The small rain down can rain?  
Christ, if my love were in my arms/  
And I in my bed again!*

**Lament** Any poem expressing deep grief, usually at the death of a loved one or some other loss.

### **Narrative poem/ Ballad**

A poem that tells a story. The ballad is a popular narrative song passed down orally. In the English tradition, it usually follows a form of rhymed (abcb) quatrains alternating four-stress and three-stress lines. Folk (or traditional) ballads are anonymous and recount tragic, comic, or heroic stories with emphasis on a central dramatic event.

### **Ode**

A long, stately poem in stanzas of varied length, meter, and form. Usually a serious poem on an exalted subject, such as Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," but sometimes a more lighthearted work, such as Neruda's "Ode to My Socks." Romantic Odes were written in quatrains in a more philosophical, contemplative manner. They vary in stanza form and often address an intense emotion at the onset of a personal crisis.

**Pastoral** A poem that depicts rural life in a peaceful, idealized way.

### **Quatrain**

A four-line stanza in a poem, the first four lines and the second four lines in a Petrarchan sonnet. A Shakespearean sonnet contains three quatrains followed by a couplet.

**Refrain** A line or phrase from a poem that is repeated at the end of each stanza, or at regular intervals. An example from Chaucer's poem "To Rosemonde": *Though ye to me ne do no dalliance*.

**Found poem** A prose text or texts reshaped by a poet into quasi-metrical lines. Fragments of found poetry may appear within an original poem as well.

**Stichic/Strophic:** A poem is stichic when the lines are of different lengths. It's opposite is strophic (stanzaic), where the lines are arranged in stanzas or groups of even lines.

### **Syntax**

The grammatical order of words in a sentence or line of verse or dialogue. The organization of words and phrases and clauses in sentences of prose, verse, and dialogue. In the following example, normal syntax (subject, verb, object order) is inverted: "Whose woods these are I think I know."

## SCHOOL OF SOUND and IMAGERY

**Assonance** Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds. Notice how many “O” sounds occur in this poem by Nina Bogan:  
How strange it is  
To hover over words, like the smoke  
From the loggers’ fires, over the valley.

**Consonance** The repetition of similar consonant sounds, especially at the ends of words, as in *lost* and *past* or *confess* and *dismiss*. “Walrus and the Carpenter” by Lewis Carroll:  
*The moon was shining sulkily, / Because she thought the sun / Had got no business to be there / After the day was done—  
“It’s very rude of him,” she said, / “To come and spoil the fun!”*

**Euphony**- Lines that are musically pleasant to the ear bring euphony. There is a harmony and a beauty to the language, which is what many poets are often after. Emily Dickinson’s poem, “A Bird came down the walk” has this effect, as seen in the last stanza:

*Than Oars divide the Ocean,  
Too silver for a seam—  
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon  
Leap, splashless as they swim.*

**Cacophony** Discordant sounds in the jarring juxtaposition of harsh letters or syllables, sometimes inadvertent, but often deliberately used in poetry for effect, as in the opening line of *Fences*: *Crawling, sprawling, breaching spokes of stone,*

Sound devices are important to poetic effects; to create sounds appropriate to the content, the poet may sometimes prefer to achieve a cacophonous effect instead of the more commonly sought-for euphony. The use of words with the consonants b, k and p, for example, produce harsher sounds than the soft f and v or the liquid l, m and n.

**Rhythm** The recurrence of accent or stress in lines of verse. IB students STRUGGLE with how to talk about rhythm. They like to say the line “flows.” Well, although this is technically correct, it is not learn’ed or erudite.

*Will there really be a morning? / Is there such a thing as day?  
Could I see it from the mountains / If I were as tall as they?  
Has it feet like water-lilies? / Has it feathers like a bird?  
Is it brought from famous countries / Of which I have never heard? - Emily Dickinson*

**Imagery:** Language through the experience of sense.

- Visual imagery: Sight. The most frequent type. When all at once I saw a crowd, / A host, of golden daffodils; / Beside the lake, beneath the trees, / Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. (“*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*”, Wordsworth)
- Aural or auditory imagery: sound *Listen! You hear the grating roar / Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, / At their return, up the high strand, / Begin, and cease, and then again begin, / With tremulous cadence slow, and bring / The eternal note of sadness in.* (“*Dover Beach*”, Matthew Arnold)
- Olfactory imagery: Smell The room is full of you! -- As I came in / And closed the door behind me, all at once / A something in the air, intangible, / Yet stiff with meaning, struck my senses sick! -- / Sharp, unfamiliar odors have destroyed / Each other room’s dear personality. / The heavy scent of damp, funereal flowers, -- / The very essence, hush-distilled, of Death -- / Has strangled that habitual breath of home / Whose expiration leaves all houses dead; / And wheresoe’er I look is hideous change. (“*Interim*”, St. Vincent-Millay)
- Gustatory imagery: Taste *I have eaten / the plums / that were in / the icebox / and which / you were probably / saving / for breakfast / Forgive me / they were delicious / so sweet / and so cold* (“*This Is Just to Say*”, William Carlos Williams)
- Tactile imagery: Touch *When did the garden with its banked flowers / start to smell like a funeral chapel, / and the mild breeze passing our foreheads / to feel like the back of a nurse’s hand / testing for fever? We used to be / immortal in our ignorance, sending / our kites up for the lightning, swimming / in unknown waters at night and naked.* (“*Death’s Blue-Eyed Girl*”, Pastan)
- Organic imagery: Human sensations, hunger for example *Can I see another’s woe, / And not be in sorrow too? / Can I see another’s grief, / And not seek for kind relief? / Can I see a falling tear, / And not feel my sorrow’s share? / Can a father see his child / Weep, nor be with sorrow filled?* (“*On Another’s Sorrow*”, Blake)

**Modulation** When the poet uses run-on lines and varies the degrees of accent by skillful word selection to modify the rhythmic pattern, making some phrases stop in a line (caesura), and others spill over (enjambment). This is a worthy SKILL.

**Repetition** Repetition is the recurring use of a sound, a word, a phrase, or a line. Repetition can be used to appeal to our emotions, create mood, and to emphasize important ideas. Notice how Edgar Allan Poe uses repetition in “Annabel Lee” to create emotional effects:

And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes / Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side / Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,  
In the sepulcher there by the sea,  
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

**Resonance** The quality of richness or variety of sounds in poetic texture, as in Milton’s  
. . . and the thunder . . . ceases now / To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.

## SCHOOL OF PUNCTUATION

**Cadence** or pace in poetry is influenced by the rhythm of the words, but it is also influenced by the amount and kind of punctuation. The general rule: the more punctuation, the slower the poem will read. Punctuation is not the only factor influencing a reader's pace, but it is an important influence.

**End-stopped line** A line of poetry where there is punctuation at the end. It is not necessary to have every line in the poem stopped this way, but the punctuation essentially stops the thought and allows the reader to catch a breath. This is used alongside caesura and enjambment in great poetry. Coleridge used this form in the Rime of the Ancient Mariner:

*It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.  
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"*

**Absence of punctuation** Some poets omit punctuation or use it minimally. If they decided not to use punctuation, or if used sparsely, perhaps you will have to give even more thought to find a correct reading of the poem. The poet may subscribe to the philosophy that multiple readings are possible and legitimate. e.e. cummings made a practice of this:

*anyone lived in a pretty how town  
(with up so floating many bells down)  
spring summer autumn winter  
he sang his didn't he danced his did.*

**Caesura:** From the Latin word *caedere* to "to cut", a caesura represents a pause in the sense or order of the words. Caesurae always occur between two words, one at the end and one at the beginning of a clause. Depending on where the caesura occurs, it may be described as strong or weak. In dactylic hexameter, the main caesura usually occurs in the third foot. Poets can also employ a caesura, use run-on lines and vary the degrees of accent by skillful word selection to modify the rhythmic pattern, a process called modulation. Accents heightened by semantic emphasis also provide diversity.

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