



# Musicality of Poetry

Sounds Devices

# Two Ways to create “music”

1. Choice of and arrangement of sounds
2. Arrangement of accents





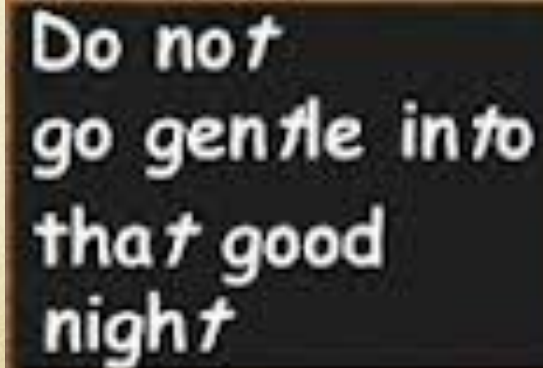
# A paradox to notice!

- Humans like the familiar, but we also like variety.
- If we get too much of the same thing, we're bored.
- If we get too much variety- it's too difficult to follow and it's confusing.
- Artists must use both: some things must be consistent- but not everything.



# Repetition of Sounds

- Alliteration “tried and true”
- Consonance “struts and frets”, “odds and ends” “short and sweet”
- Assonance “time and mind” “band slam” “mad hatter” “free and easy”



Do not  
go gentle into  
that good  
night





# Types of Rhymes

- End rhyme
- Internal rhyme
- Half rhymes/ slant rhymes
- Masculine rhyme (involves  
Only one syllable)
- Feminine rhyme

(involves two or more) Ex. Spitefully and delightfully



# Caution about Rhymes



1. The repetitions are entirely a matter of sound-not spelling Ex. Bear and fair rhyme
2. Alliteration, consonance , assonance and masculine rhyme involve only stressed or accented syllables
3. The words involved must be close enough together that the ear retains the sound, consciously or subconsciously. This distance will vary from poem to poem.
4. Musical devices do **NOT** convey meaning. They reinforce meaning that is established by other aspects of language.



# Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

by Robert Frost (1874-1963)

- Explain the paradoxes in lines 1 and 3.
- Discuss the poem as a series of symbols. What are the symbolic meanings of “gold” in the final line of the poem?
- Discuss the contributions of alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme and other repetitions to the effectiveness of the poem.

# Sometimes it's just about the fun of it!

1. Sound and rhythm can function to reinforce meaning, but sometimes it's just for the coolness of the sounds.
2. Onomatopoeia- the use of words that sound like what they mean. Ex. Bow-wow, ouch, hiss, snap, hiss, bang.
3. Generally speaking we can determine the presence of onomatopoetic words by reading them outloud.



# Jabberwocky- Lewis Carroll

○ 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

'Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!

He took his vorpal sword in hand:  
Long time the manxome foe he sought ~  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood a while in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One two! One two! And through and  
through

The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

'And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
Oh frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

○ What happens in this poem? Does it have any meaning?

# “The Forge”

## - Seamus Heaney (1939)

All I know is a door in the dark.  
Outside, old axles and iron hoops rusting;  
Inside, the hammered anvil's short-pitched  
ring,  
The unpredictable fantail of sparks  
Or hiss when a new shoe toughens in water.  
The anvil must be somewhere in the center,  
Horned as a unicorn, at one end square,  
Set there immovable: an altar  
Where he expends himself in shape and music.  
Sometimes, leather-aproned, hairs in the nose,  
He leans out on the jamb, recalls a clatter  
Of hoofs where traffic is flashing in rows;  
Then grunts and goes in, with a slam and flick  
To beat real iron out, to work the bellows.

Find:

1. The rhyme scheme
2. Alliteration
3. Assonance
4. Consonance
5. Onomatopoeia
6. Half rhyme

Explain how these devices reinforce meaning.

Find:

1. Words with unusual connotations
2. Literal imagery
3. How is the imagery of the title throughout the poem?

Bottom line:

What's the theme?

*Forge (n)- A place where Metal is heated and wrought into shape.*



# Assignment

- Use one of the poems as a model and write a poem about an experience that marked you in some way. Poem must include the following:
  1. rhyme (NOT end rhyme)
  2. Alliteration
  3. Assonance
  4. Consonance
  5. Onomatopoeia
  6. Words with unusual connotations
  7. Literal imagery
  8. How is the imagery of the title throughout the poem?
    - What's the theme?

# Textbook used for this presentation

Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*

*Reading, Thinking, and Writing.* (University of  
Connecticut)

ISBN-10: 1-319-00218-8; ISBN-13: 978-1-319-00218-3;

Format: Paper Text, 1824 pages