

So what is poetry?

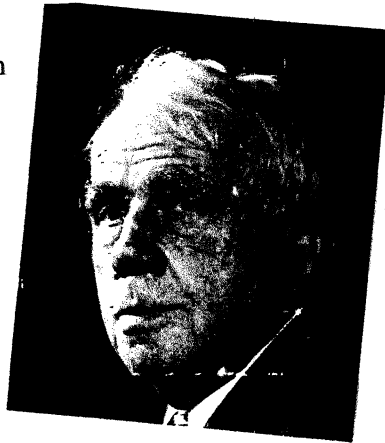
WEI T'AI

(11th Century)

"Poetry presents the thing in order to convey the feeling. It should be precise about the thing and reticent about the feeling, for as soon as the mind connects with the thing, the feeling shows in the words; this is how poetry enters deeply into us."

Poetry begins in
delight and ends in
wisdom.

Robert Frost



When in public, poetry should take off its
clothes and wave to the nearest person in sight;
it should be seen in the company of thieves and
lovers rather than journalists and publishers. ♪

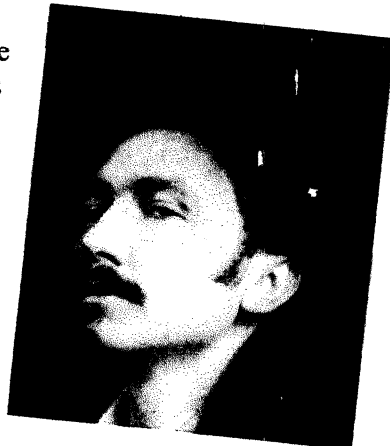
Brian Patten

People disagree about very important things,
things like money, sex, race, bombs, school,
parents, work... We must also agree with each
other but we won't unless we discuss or argue
it out. Poems are ways of beginning such
arguments. ♪

Michael Rosen

♪ Poetry is language
pared down to its
essentials. ♪

Ezra Pound



♪ Poetry is basically entertainment. It is
no substitute of political speech. ♪

L. Kwesi Johnstone



♪ Poetry is something
essential to you,
something you
recognise instinctively
as a true sounding
aspect of yourself and
your own experience. ♪

Seamus Heaney

♪ Prose: words in their best order.
Poetry: the best words in their best order. ♪

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

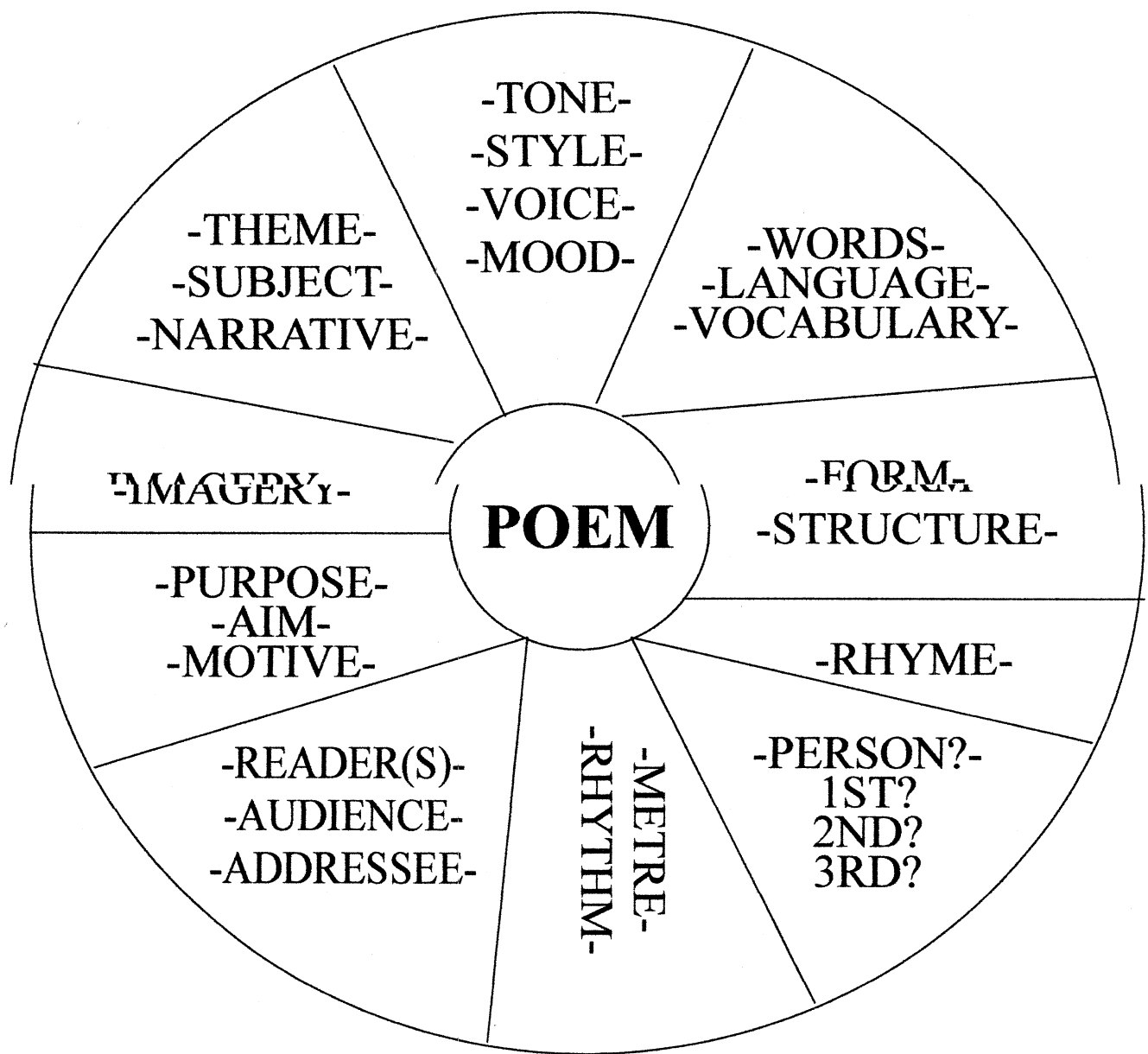
♪ All the poet can
do today is to warn.
That is why the
true poets must be
truthful. ♪

Wilfred Owen



♪ A poem should not mean but be. ♪
Archibald McCleish

♪ Poetry is...words with a tune... ♪
Jon Stallworthy



A	a.	Accent	E	j.	Epitaph
	b.	Allegory		k.	Epithalamion
	c.	Alexandrine		l.	Euphemism
	d.	Alliteration		m.	Even accent
	e.	Allusion	F	a.	Fable
	f.	Ambiguity		b.	Fancy
	g.	Anapaest		c.	Feminine ending
	h.	Anthology		d.	Figurative Language
	i.	Anthropomorphism		e.	Foot
	j.	Antithesis		f.	Found Poem
	k.	Antonym		g.	Free Verse
	l.	Apostrophe	H	a.	Haiku
	m.	Assonance		b.	Half - rhyme
B	a.	Ballad		c.	Heptameter
	b.	Ballade		d.	Heroic couplet
	c.	Bathos		e.	Hexameter
	d.	Blank Verse		f.	Hyperbole
	e.	Burlesque	I	a.	Iamb (ic)
C	a.	Cadence		b.	Idyll
	b.	Caesura		c.	Image/Imageery
	c.	Cinquain		d.	Imagism
	d.	Clerihew		e.	Internal rhyme
	e.	Cliche		f.	Irony
	f.	Colloquial (ism)	K	a.	Kinetic Poetry
	g.	Common Measure			
	h.	Concett	L	a.	Lament
	i.	Concrete Poetry		b.	Lampoon
	j.	Consonance		c.	Latinism
	k.	Couplet		d.	Lay
D	a.	Dactyl (ic)		e.	Limerick
	b.	Diction		f.	Lyric (al)
	c.	Dimeter	M	a.	Masculine ending
	d.	Dirge		b.	Metaphor
	e.	Disjunct		c.	Metonymy
	f.	Dramatic Monologue		d.	Metre
E	a.	Eclogue		e.	Monologue
	b.	Elegy		f.	Motif
	c.	Elision	N	a.	Narrative Verse
	d.	End - rhyme			
	e.	End - stopped			
	f.	Enjambement			
	g.	Englyn			
	h.	Epic			
	i.	Epigram			

- O** a. Octameter
b. Octave
c. Ode
d. Onomatopoeia
e. Ottava Rima
f. Oxymoron
- P** a. Panegyric
b. Pararhyme
c. Paradox
d. Parody
e. Pastoral
f. Pathetic fallacy
g. Pathos
h. Periphrasis
i. Persona
j. Personification
k. Pentameter
l. Petrarchan Sonnet
m. Platitude
n. Poetic diction
o. Prose poem
p. Prosody
q. Pun

- Q** a. Quatrain

- R** a. Refrain
b. Renga
c. Rhetorical question
d. Rhyme
e. Rhyme Royal
f. Rhythm

- S** a. Satire
b. Scansion
c. Septet
d. Sestet
e. Sight-rhyme
f. Similie
g. Soliloquy
h. Sonnet
i. Spondee
j. Stanza
k. Stress
l. Structure
m. Style
n. Syllabic Verse
o. Symbol
p. Synonym

- T** a. Tercet
b. Tetrameter
c. Terza Rima
d. Theme
e. Threnody
f. Tone
g. Trimeter
h. Triple rhyme
i. Triplet
j. Trochee

- V** a. Versification
b. Vers libre
c. Vernacular
d. Villanelle
e. Visual Poetry

- Z** a. Zeugma

"SEEING WITH NEW EYES"

1. "bright as meringues, the swans sweep
sideways down the passionate water"
2. "Roger spat into the fire,
leaned back and watched his phlegm
like a Welsh rarebit
bubbling on the brands"
3. "I fit a pencil to the sharpener
and turn it in the socket.
Wood frills like a red carnation."
4. "The baby sleeps, slumped
like a bean bag in her chair."
5. "Rubbish smokes at the end of the garden,
cracking its knuckles to pass the time."
6. "the dustbins bulge like vol-au-vents."
7. ".....the kitchen bowl?
Poor dogsbody,
its hard enamel
is chipped like a dalmation."
8. "Her scissors move through the material
like a swimmer doing crawl,
among the archipelago of tissue paper."
9. "she watched a spider's web
as it shone in the sun
like a long-playing record."
10. "Yards away, on the cellar steps,
a thrush jiggled a snail in its pram."

GOOD, and NOT-SO-GOOD POEMS.....

GOOD POEMS.....

- a journey, exploration, discovery....with an unsure destination (CRICK)
- concrete and precise as possible.....with a "thinginess" (See W.C.Williams: "No ideas but in things") No poetry but in things?
 - a poem should develop organically
 - honest: the poet can make up FACTS, but not emotions/impulses
 - the right length, form, rhythm
 - the poem talks to, rather than at the reader
 - surprises us, shocks us, unsettles us, jolts us
 - feelings? Emotions? Yes, but grounded in things and observation. So, if you decide to write a LOVE poem (take care!), avoid vagueness and pomposity, and ground it in things and even humour. (See how Shakespeare does it in his sonnets, and Simon Armitage in "Greenhouse")
 - concise: John Ashberry(?) once said there should be at least 2 interesting things in every line
 - W.H.Auden said poetry is "memorable speech"; Robert Lowell said poetry is "heightened conversation"; Peter Sansom: "Show, not tell. Speak, not re/cite."

NOT-SO-GOOD POEMS.....

- too many adjectives and adverbs clogging the poem: precise nouns and verbs are usually preferable
- archaisms, and using language no longer spoken (See Wordsworth, Keats, and Ezra Pound on this)
- overuse of: the/a/an, etc and conjunctions and prepositions
- poems about "issues" e.g. green issues
- rhyme: misuse of
- verbosity and lengthiness: e.g. calling fish 'the finny tribe'; a spade 'a digging implement'; work, 'anxious toil'
- too much poet's comment and control of our response (See Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier") See Keats on "palpable design"
- inversions of normal word order
- too many generalisations
- dishonesty e.g. sentimentality
- self-consciously 'romantic' and 'poetic' subjects e.g. Time; Peace; Flowers; Fading Beauty; Autumn Sadness; My departed cat/dog/budgie.....

Bredon Hill

We have trudged five miles
To this place,
A sky of residual blue,
A tower confined to the follies
Of history,
Folklore coffined in memory.

There is beauty in abundance —
Leaves sequined on a patchwork path,
Viewpoint Vistas across the vale,
A river that pythons around
Convolutéd contours.

Hardy could have found intrigue
In these rubble-ruined cottages;
And Dickens drawn-out the poverty
From Pershore's aggravated red-brick.
Plot. And counterplot.

But now, in a tumble-twisted hut,
We put back calories,
Devour lovingly put-together
Egg-and-cress sandwiches,
Covet the lump of cheese.

The suddenness of weather change
Surprises; the entire scrap hazy
Like some breathed-on wine glass.

Soft-timpani of drizzle
On the corrugated roof,
The hapless Gloria of September tints:

To leave only dusk,
Its moon-dog madness —
Clouds flexing sanity,
Hurrying to asylum.

At last I understand
Those yesterday-eyes of Alban Berg —
The fugitive sectioned
In domestic bliss.

~~By the way, the above is a parody of the poem 'Bredon Hill' by John Galsworthy, which appears in the book 'The Poems of John Galsworthy' published by the Bodley Head, London, 1931.~~



Yes I remember Adlestrop,
At least the name. One afternoon

train

The express slowed down there & drew up

Quite

Yes, I remember Adlestrop,
At least the name. One afternoon
The steam train slowed down & drew up
There unexpectedly. 'Twas June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
~~But no one left~~ No one left & no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop, only the name,

And willows, willow herb & grass,
And meadowsweet. The haycocks dry
Were not less still & lonely fair
Than the high cloud tiers in the sky.

And all that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther & farther off, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire & Gloucestershire.

Yes, I remember Adlestrop—
At least the name. One afternoon
the express train

heat the train slowed & drew up there
Against its custom.

There unexpectedly. It 'twas June.

Yes, I remember Adlestrop—
The name, because
At least the name. One afternoon
Of heat, the express train drew up there
Against the custom
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left & no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop, only the name,

And, willows, willow herb & grass,
And meadowsweet. The haycocks dry
Were not less still & lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets tiers in the sky.

And all that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther & farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire & Gloucestershire.

(2nd draft)

Adlestrop

Yes. I remember Adlestrop—
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop—only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

THE FINAL POEM

(1st draft)

THE TONGUES IN MY HEAD

"....every mouth confessing its crude shire....." - TED HUGHES

"Those hobnailed boots from beyond the mountain

Were walking, by God, all over the fine

Lawns of elocution." - SEAMUS HEANEY

"What ish my nation?" - Macmorris in "Henry V"

* * * *

'Instruction'? 'Training'? Varnish dull as khaki

For two hoops we shuffled through once-weekly

Our last year of school. Religious Instruction

Laid strange words like mossy stones in our hands;

Speech Training took away those we knew

And set to polish their pits and blurs to glass.

'Speech Miss' was priest, conductor, RSM.

Reverently she'd raise cupped hands to coax

Satin vowels, quartz consonants from our yowls

Of 'Daffodils' (no deep-Lancs 'allut wunce'!);

Defeated, marked time out with brisk left-rights

Of Peter Piper, slow marches of Leith police.

The top stream had 'Electrocution', a pal

Consoled. But at my last day's interview

The Head noted 'Little effort' under 'Speech'.

"The King's English..your Mother Tongue...you should (cough)

Cherish it! *King? Mother?* I was adrift

In sexual confusion. "No tongue in your head, then?"

* * *

A bar limpet at my tutor's freshers' do,

Till "Sweet, or -?" "Sour", dared I risk? With sherry

(Sweet) I tagged a rank of brocade waistcoats.

"You play squash?" *Play?* "Bitter's more my tippie."

Another: "Do say that again!" I did.

A third (putting on the gorm): "From oop North?"

Where, months on from my stint for King and Country

(Mine, not HM's), my first vac and with an uncle's

Tart "No need to come on posh!" in my ears,

My head still cherished a happy and glorious,

Two-fingers-to-grammar, cockney instruction:

"Get fell in! Same as what you was previous!"
