



THE STRUCTURE OF VERSE

STANZA (or strophe)

– two or more verse lines combined.

“**Stanza** is a verse segment composed of a number of lines having a definite measure and rhyming system which is repeated throughout the poem.”

– *I. R. Galperin*

STANZAS TYPICAL FOR ENGLISH POETRY:



THE BALLAD STANZA



THE HEROIC COUPLET



THE SPENSERIAN STANZA



THE OTTAVA RIMA



THE SONNET

THE BALLAD STANZA

- mostly iambus, dactylic and anapestic feet are also possible
- four lines: the 1st and the 3rd have four feet each (tetrameter)
- the 2nd and the 4th have three feet each (trimeter)
- only the 2nd and the 4th lines rhyme
- sometimes poets may use internal rhyme in the 1st and 3rd lines
- abcb



THE BALLAD STANZA



In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.

Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, lines 75 – 78



THE HEROIC COUPLET

- one of the oldest forms
- was mostly employed in elevated genres
- iambic pentameter
- two lines
- aa, bb, cc, etc.



THE HEROIC COUPLET



Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour.

Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*



THE SPENSERIAN STANZA

- introduced by Edmund Spenser in the 16th century
- nine lines: eight of them – iambic pentameter
- the 9th – iambic hexameter
- ababbcbcc



THE SPENSERIAN STANZA

Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepherds weeds,
Am now enforst a far unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose prayes having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broad emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithfull loues shall moralize my song.

Spenser, *Faerie Queene*



THE OTTAVA RIMA

- from Latin *octo*, Italian *otto* 'eight'
- came to England from Italy in the 16th century
- eight lines
- iambic pentameter
- ab ab ab cc



THE OTTAVA RIMA

In Seville was he born, a pleasant city,
Famous for oranges and women – he
Who has not seen it will be much to pity,
So says the proverb – and I quite agree;
Of all the Spanish towns is none more pretty,
Cadiz, perhaps – but that you soon may see: –
Don Juan's parents lived beside the river,
A noble stream, and called the Guadalquivir.

Lord Byron, *Don Juan*



THE SONNET

- from Italian *sonetto*
- fourteen lines
- iambic pentameter
- rhyming must be strictly observed
- abba abba cdc ded
- Shakespearian sonnet: abab cdcd efef gg



THE SONNET

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Shakespeare, Sonnet 130



FREE VERSE

- no set rhythm
- no set rhyme pattern
- lines of irregular length
- must not be confused with **blank verse** (which does not rhyme, but does follow a regular rhythm)



FREE VERSE



After the Sea-Ship—after the whistling winds;
After the white-gray sails, taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves, hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship.

Whitman, *After the Sea-Ship*





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION