

Poetic Forms

Aubade: A French form, a poem for the coming day, specifically dawn or the parting of lovers in the morning.

Dramatic Monologue: The poet speaks through and an assumed voice—a fictional or historical character—to an implied audience. A form with no structural or metrical requirements, the dramatic monologue is a character study of the subjective point of view of the persona.

Haiku: A Japanese form, seventeen syllables in three lines (5, 7, 5), presenting a moment of intense perception, an image, spare and condensed.

Sapphics: Lyric verses often dealing with desire and longing. Named after Sappho, the legendary ancient female Greek poet, Sapphic stanzas are built on a strict but subtle metrical pattern consisting of three lines composed of pairs of trochees separated by a dactyl, and a fourth line (the Adonic) composed of a dactyl followed by a trochee.

Sestina: A French form consisting of six sestets and a three-line envoi, using only six end-words, repeating them in a different prescribed order in each stanza. The envoi uses all six words, three at the end of the line and three in the middle.

Terza Rima: An Italian form organized by tercets, often in an iambic pentameter, with an interlocking rhyme scheme (aba bcb). The final stanza is usually a couplet.

Villanelle: A French form organized in five tercets followed by a quatrain. The first and third lines of the first stanza are repeated alternately as the last line of each remaining tercet, becoming the last two lines of the final quatrain.