English 1

Mr. Scholtz

A Poet’s Guide to Poetic Devices

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| Poetic Devices | Definition | Example  | My own example  |
| alliteration | the repetition of a sound at the beginning of a word in a sequence of nearby words  | Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before. (“The Raven,” Poe) |  |
| assonance  | the repetition of identical or similar vowels | Hear the mellow wedding bells, Golden bells! What a world of happiness their harmony foretells! (“The Bells,” Poe) |  |
| consonance | the repetition of final consonant sound or sounds following different vowel sounds in proximate words | Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood; Blue with all malice, like a madman’s flash; And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh. (“Arms and the Boy” Wilfred Owen) |  |
| onomatopoeia  | a word whose sound seems to resemble closely the sound it denotes OR sounds that imitate another sound | Moo, purr, quack, buzz, hiss, sizzle, etc. OR “…the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain…” (Poe) ν Note how the “s” sound mimics the sound of satin curtains rustling |  |
| hyperbole | the use of exaggeration for effect | Here once the embattled farmers stood, And fired the shot heard round the world. |  |
| personification  | an inanimate object or concept is given human characteristics or feelings | Nothing would sleep in that cellar, dank as a ditch, Bulbs broke out of boxes hunting for chinks in the dark, |  |
| oxymoron  | Juxtaposing two opposite words to show an emphatic and dramatic contradiction | Defining slavery as “living death” (Life as a Slave Girl, Harriot Jacobs) Jumbo shrimp; Great Depression; Original copy; Awfully good |  |
| imagery  | Appealing to one of the five senses | Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach; Three fields to cross till a farm appears; A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch And blue spurt of a lighted match, And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears, Than the two hearts beating each to each. (“Meeting at Night,” Robert Browning) |  |
| anaphora | words or phrases at the beginning of successive lines or sentences. | “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it \*\*Anaphora is a form of parallelism.\*\* was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” (Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities |  |