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Criteria, Anthology, and Explication of Poetry for First Grade

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CRITERIA, ANTHOLOGY, AND EXPLICATION OF POETRY FOR FIRST GRADE

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by

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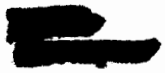

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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ARS POETICA

Archibald MacLeish

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown--

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind--

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

A poem should be equal to:
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea--

A poem should not mean
But be. (50:515)

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CHAPTER I

WHY POETRY?

I. INTRODUCTION

From the time of Plato the nature, value, and effect of poetry have been discussed and written. It is the special interest here to explore some of these evaluations and discussions, focusing attention on the unique contributions of poetry to education.

In his Republic Plato banned all poetry except "hymns to the gods and famous men" (58:8). It was his opinion that "all poetical imitations are ruinous to the understanding of the hearers" and that only by revealing the "true nature" of poetry could people be protected from it (58:1). That nature, as he understood it, was an imitation of an imitation of reality, hence "thrice removed from the truth" (58:3).

But even more dangerous than its distance from truth was the power, recognized by Plato, of poetry to stir the emotions. Inasmuch as from his point of view the emotions were to be controlled, this undesirable stimulation and

expression of emotion in a vicarious experience made it more difficult to control emotion in a personal experience.

> And quite the same may be said of lust and anger and all the other affections, of desire and pain and pleasure, which are held to be inseparable from every action--in all of them poetry feeds and waters the passions instead of drying them up; she lets them rule, although they ought to be controlled, if mankind are ever to increase in happiness and virtue (58:8).

That poetry is imitation of a sort and that it does have the power to stir the emotions have been acknowledged by many since the revelation by Plato, but most have regarded those qualities as good and desirable, rather than dangerous.

The relationship between poetry and imitation, and the resultant pleasure, were discussed by Aristotle in "The Poetics." He saw the instincts for imitation and rhythm as the basic reasons, or causes, for poetry.

> Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation he learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated. We have evidence of this in the facts of experience. Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity; such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and of dead bodies. The cause of this again is,

> that to learn gives the liveliest pleasure, not only to philosophers, but to men in general; whose capacity, however, of learning is more limited (58:200).

Man, then, has the instinct for imitation and receives pleasure both as participant and viewer. Both participant and viewer learn through imitation.

> Imitation, then is one instinct of our nature. Next, there is the instinct for "harmony" and rhythm, metres being manifestly sections of rhythm. Persons therefore starting with this natural gift developed by degrees their special aptitudes, till their rude improvisations gave birth to Poetry (58:200).

This instinct for harmony and rhythm developed eventually and naturally into poetry.

Aristotle spoke also about the excitation of the emotions by poetry. He felt this was a value rather than a dangerous quality. By vicariously experiencing strong emotion one is purged of it. This value of catharsis is revealed in his definition of tragedy:

> Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions (58:202).

Whereas Plato thought exercising emotion caused the loss of control over those emotions, Aristotle saw that a purgation, a loss of strength of the emotion, resulted.

Wordsworth, in the appendix to the "Lyrical Ballads," stated that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" that would be communicated to the reader, exciting a like response in him (58:32).

Shelley, who in his essay "A Defense of Poetry" called poetry "the expression of the imagination" and recognized that the instinct for poetry is as old as man, felt that the kinds of vicarious emotional experiences possible in poetry served to "awaken and enlargen the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought" (60:2,13). "It (poetry) compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know" (60:13).

Coleridge in Biographia Literaria stated that a poem had "for its immediate object pleasure, not truth" and felt that one of the qualities of a poet, and through him, of poetry, was "a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order" (11:10,12).

If it is accepted that poetry gives pleasure, stimulates the imagination, and excites or exercises the emotions,

what place does it have in education? An article in the Journal of Higher Education entitled "Education, Poetry, and the Person" has answered that question.

> The position which poetry holds in education can most clearly be seen with its relationship to the human subject as he is present in the world. For poetry serves to keep man in contact with that which constitutes his most personal and direct experience with life. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Since education is a human awakening and since poetry reaches the human being through imagination, poetry should hold a very important place in education. Art conveys a kind of knowledge . . . which brings us in contact with those things which by their very nature can be apprehended only intuitively, but which never the less must be glimpsed if we are to live full lives (73:334,336).

Sherman, who calls poetry "the gift that lasts," perceives that "poetry links people together in the human race and removes the barriers which separate them" (61:93). If the most important task of teaching in our time is "the ending of man's estrangement from himself," then, from this point of view, "poetry is more important to our salvation than rocketry" (13:377).

Smith, in a recent article in Elementary English entitled "The Children's Literary Heritage," had this to say of the role of poetry in the elementary school:

> Perhaps the supreme privilege of the teacher of literature in the elementary school is to introduce children to poetry. The poet sees with the eye of the imagination, and learning to see as he does can make all life different for youthful readers. He hears with the ear of a musician, and learning to hear as he does can enrich experience for boys and girls as long as they live.
>
> Poetry, pupils should learn early, is not a thing apart from life. There is a poem about everything that interests boys and girls, and the sooner they discover that fact, the richer their lives will be (62:721).

Endres in an earlier edition of that same magazine also considered the children's literary heritage, but focused on what the lack or absence of poetry might do to children:

> My general thesis is this: children and youth who do not have rich and varied experiences with poetry lose contact with a most edifying and important segment of their heritage. This is true at each of the several levels of human experience, whether the poetry deals with the immediate community and time, with the world community, or with the world of the ancients (17:838).

The school, then, has a real responsibility to provide these experiences with poetry in order to transmit this cultural heritage. "If children are to become acquainted with poetry, it must come through the open doorway of the school, with teachers who know and value the experience of poetry" (46:75). In this day of emphasis on and interest in

science and technological learning, it is essential as the instruments of education to transmit more than that aspect of our heritage, to nourish as well the other kinds of knowledge. "In an age of science in which great emphasis is placed upon material reality, we must not make the mistake of passing over that which is most meaningful to man, his intimate, spiritual experience of life" (73:336).

C. Day Lewis in his book Poetry For You, a book written for boys and girls about poetry, has made this distinction between science and poetry and the contribution each makes:

> Science is concerned with finding out and stating the facts; poetry's task is to give you the look, the smell, the taste, the "feel" of those facts. Each has its own purpose and reward.
>
> It is the inclusion of feeling that makes the difference between poetry and science (40:12-13).

Frye in his book The Educated Imagination has recognized another basic contribution of poetry to children:

> What poetry can give the student is, first of all, the sense of physical movement. Poetry is not irregular lines in a book, but something very close to dance and song, something to walk down (the) street keeping time to (18:121).

Certainly this recalls Aristotle's instinct for harmony and rhythm. Frye also echoes Aristotle in recognizing the instinct for poetry in all people:

> Poetry is the most direct and simple means of expressing oneself in words: the most primitive nations have poetry, but only quite well developed civilizations can produce good prose. So don't think of poetry as a perverse and unnatural way of distorting ordinary prose statements; prose is a much less natural way of speaking than poetry is (18:121).

The role of poetry in the development of the faculty of imagination is one of the most important contributions of poetry to education. Higgins, who called imagination "the underlying strength of the child and the poet," defined it as "the faculty which grasps those invisible links that bind together the visible points of existence" (28:807,808). Earnest Ernest in his textbook A Foreword to Literature made this comment about the defining of "imagination:"

> Imagination is a vague word but the poets themselves often use it to describe a certain element in their work. For Wordsworth it was the ability to see common things in a new light; for Blake it meant the power to transcend the ordinary limits of the five senses and to see realities beyond the material (14:4).

The use and development of imagination through literature, specifically poetry, is viewed this way by Frye:

> Literature speaks the language of the imagination, and the study of literature is supposed to train and improve the imagination. But we use our imagination all the time; it comes into all our conversation and practical life: it even produces dreams when we're asleep. Consequently we have only the choice between a badly trained imagination and a well trained one, whether we ever read a poem or not (18:134-35).

So if we do choose a well trained imagination, poetry can make a real contribution to that training.

C. Day Lewis views this exercise of imagination and the resultant sharpening of the senses as the "highest function of poetry" (40:100).

The exercise of the imagination has been linked by some writers to another possible contribution of poetry to education--the teaching of values. Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote: "The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting on the cause" (58:459). More recently Sherman stated that "poetry creates a climate for good values" (61:93).

A less aesthetic, perhaps more functional and hence easier to discuss, contribution of poetry to elementary education is the vocabulary that can be encountered in poetry. The New York curriculum guide for poetry makes that point this way:

> One of the many reasons why pupils in the Elementary Schools should study poetry is because of the splendid training it gives in acquiring a more extensive vocabulary. We note that although several words may mean the same thing, yet certain words have a special shade of meaning or sound which makes them more expressive (54:51).

The benefits that poetry might provide to language development certainly cannot be disregarded.

More responsible citizenship in a free country might also be an end product of the role of poetry in language development. The special relationship between language and freedom is revealed in this statement by Frye:

> You see, freedom has nothing to do with lack of training; it can only be the product of training. You're not free to move unless you've learned to walk, and not free to play the piano unless you practice. Nobody is capable of free speech unless he knows how to use language, and such language is not a gift: it has to be worked at (18:148).

Another contribution of poetry to education is the possible use of it as a motivational device for creative experiences. A thesis reported in Elementary English used poetry as motivation for painting in order to discover "those rhythmic words which stimulated feeling and emotional response in a visual manner" (53:56).

This same study also recognized that "the poetry readings provided perceptual and auditory experiences as a basis for language development" (53:59).

A teacher in California recently reported using poetry with educationally deprived children to help them "to learn inductively to be better readers, speakers, and writers through daily participation in choral verse work" (9:275). In this as yet experimental program the teacher felt that this oral group work with poetry appeared to help them:

> . . . (1) increase their feeling for and knowledge of the intonation of our language, (2) expand their vocabularies, (3) use context clues, (4) read for meaning, and (5) become more skillful in using oral and written language (9:275).

Some teachers, perhaps agreeing that poetry is a significant part of life and that it does make a real contribution to education, use poetry to help teach all aspects of the curriculum from safety, through arithmetic and social studies, to science (67; 34:7-10). It is true, as one teacher has written, that "the same mysteries that challenge the scientist also capture the imagination of the poet" (63:27). However, there is a difference that must not be

ignored: "Science gives us information about the world. Poetry releases meanings about the world" (63:27).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Broad Problem

Poetry is an important part of education and an accepted part of the elementary school program. In present practice the trend is to correlate the various elements of the school program, so that the selection of poetry is frequently determined by the subject matter of the poem as it correlates to some area of study. This manner of selection may fail to give sufficient attention to the merits of the poem as a poem.

Subject matter alone is an unsatisfactory basis of choice; the poetic qualities of the poem must be the prime determiners in the decision to present any poem to any class whether that class is kindergarten or advanced study of poetry. Unless the teacher is selective and discriminating, she will be unable to project the emphasis of choice where it really belongs--on the quality of the poetry itself.

A More Limited Problem

In the first grade poetry, or verse, or rhyme, is used in many ways. It is an integral part of the reading readiness program as an aid to developing oral and aural discrimination of initial consonants and rhyme endings. Frequently poetry is used in rhythm activities or as a language activity to develop oral facility. Sometimes poetry is used for choral speaking to provide both a language activity and a group experience. Often poetry is a part of a unit of study in science or social studies such as "Insects," "Pets," "The Farm," or "The Family." Occasionally poetry is read aloud by the teacher as a listening exercise.

All too frequently it appears that the basis of choice is the utilization of the poem rather than the merit or the qualities of the poem as poetry. A poem is too often chosen for use in the classroom because it is about something, rather than because it is something. As the poet Archibald MacLeish has said, "A poem should not mean/But be."

In the first grade the problem of selecting poetry is further compounded by the short attention span, what has been felt to be the limited listening or understanding vocabulary, the relatively limited background of experiences on which to

base understanding, and the range of interests of children of that age group. Nevertheless, even in first grade it is essential to keep the focus of choice on poetic quality.

First graders are usually aware of rhyme and rhythm because of their experiences with Mother Goose and other nursery rhymes during the pre-school years and in kindergarten. These familiar rhymes are a good place to begin; as in all things, it is essential to proceed from the known to the new. To make the transition from Mother Goose to the poetry of Stevenson, Rosetti, or Dickinson requires that the teacher consider both the special nature of the first grader and the unique qualities that differentiate poetry from doggerel.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In recognition of this multi-faceted problem of selecting poems to use with first grade, it is the purpose of this study (1) to establish criteria of evaluation and selection, relating that criteria to the bases of poetry criticism, (2) using that criteria, to compile an anthology for use with first grade, and (3) to explicate each of the

selected poems in such a manner as to help the teacher better understand and appreciate the particular poetic qualities of that poem, and hence be more effective in using that poem in the classroom.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were observed during this study:

1. Mother Goose and other nursery rhymes were excluded because most children will have encountered these rhymes prior to first grade.

2. Poetry composition by children was not considered a part of this study because the focus here is on critical selection from the teacher's point of view.

3. The study was limited to the selection of poems judged by the writer as appropriate for first grade. Exclusion does not necessarily imply that a poem was judged "not good;" rather, it may be either that the poem was judged unsuitable for first grade or that it was not evaluated.

4. Explication of the selected poems is intended for the edification of the teacher and is not intended as instructional material for the first grade pupil.

5. The study was not intended to be methods or procedures in teaching poetry. However, by defining and developing a greater understanding of the nature of poetry, it is hoped that a method that is more a philosophy than a procedure will be revealed.

CHAPTER II

CRITICAL CRITERIA

In order to develop the first purpose of this study, the establishing of critical criteria based on the bases of criticism, it is necessary to review both what poets and critics have written about the nature of poetry in general and what specialists in education have written about the special nature of poetry for children.

I. POETS AND CRITICS

Poets and their critics have attempted to define poetry, to establish standards of identification of "good," or "real," poetry. Some emphasize the source, the inspirational experience that motivated the poet to write the poem; others focus on specific elements of language within the poem. Many stress the effect upon the reader or listener as the important point of identification. Usually, however, it is some combination of all three that is presented.

Aristotle in "The Poetics" indicated specific requirements of form and language, according to the practice of his

time. But even so, the response was still an important part of the total. As Lane Cooper has written in his expository book The Poetics of Aristotle:

> Aristotle . . . assumes that a poem is to be judged by its effect upon a man of sound sense and good education, though not necessarily an expert--upon the 'judicious,' as Hamlet remarks. . . . Form and function being virtually interchangeable terms, a well formed poem, like a beautiful living animal, will give the right sort of judge the right kind of pleasure (12:17-18).

So even for Aristotle the pleasure elicited by the poem was a real factor in determining the quality of that poem.

Wordsworth thought poetry was the result of a powerful emotion "recollected in tranquillity" (58:39). He believed the subject matter of poetry should be the happenings of everyday life and the language should be that of the common man, however somewhat "purified." As for the purposes of poetry, he wrote:

> The poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man (58:36).

Pleasure, then, should result from encounter with poetry.

Coleridge, too, recognized that pleasure was the goal of poetry.

> A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species--(having this object in common with it)--it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part (11:10).

This idea of "harmonious whole," each part contributing to the total effect of the poem, is basic to the concept of poetry since the time of Coleridge even though it had been suggested earlier in Alexander Pope's "An Essay on Criticism."

> In wit, as Nature, what affects our hearts
> Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;
> 'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
> But the joint force and full result of all. (52:71)

Coleridge made a distinction between "poems" and "poetry," indicating that not all of a poem will be poetry. As for this discrimination, he wrote:

> What is poetry?--it so nearly the same question with, What is a poet?--that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind (11:12).

Since the time of Coleridge many have written much about the quality he called "Imagination" that was shared by poets and poetry.

Coleridge, however, differed with Wordsworth on the subject matter of poetry. Rather than using as topics things a part of the lives of ordinary men, Coleridge chose the supernatural, or "shadows of imagination." In Chapter Fifteen of Biographia Literaria, "The Specific Symptoms of Poetic Power," he listed the "characteristics of poetic genius." As he indicated them, those symptoms are: (1) "perfect sweetness of the versification," the music or rhythm of the poem; (2) "choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer;" (3) images that communicate passion or "have the effect of reducing multitude to unity;" and, (4) "depth and energy of thought." The quality of the thought was of equal importance with the other elements. "No man was ever yet a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher" (11:14-19).

Shelley, who in the essay "A Defense of Poetry" called a poem "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth," indicated three effects of poetry on persons:

> Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. . . . The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting on the cause (60:11, 13, 14).

These may be summarized as pleasure, vicarious experience, and exercise of the imagination. Shelley felt that this expression of language by poets, in whom the "faculty of approximation to the beautiful" resulted in metaphorical language that to the reader or listener "marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension" (60:4). In other words, poetry helps us to be more aware of the world around us and to see more of that world.

T. S. Eliot in his essay "The Social Function of Poetry" called pleasure one of the "more obvious functions" of poetry:

> The first, I think that we can be sure about is that poetry has to give pleasure. If you ask what kind of pleasure, then I can only answer, the kind of pleasure that poetry gives: simply because any other answer would take us far afield into aesthetics, and the general question of art (15:6).

However, Eliot perceived two obvious functions--the other a communication of experience.

> Beyond any specific intention which poetry may have, . . . there is always the communication of some new experience, or some fresh understanding of the familiar, or the expression of something we have experienced but have no words for, which enlarges our consciousness or refines sensibility (15:6).

Perhaps this might be called a re-ordering of experience; certainly it is related to Shelley's apprehension.

Some poets have not used the word "pleasure" in their discussions of poetry, but have implied it in what they have said. Edgar Allen Poe, although he spoke of "beauty," implied the pleasure-as-goal idea:

> I would define, in brief, the Poetry of Words as <u>The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty</u>. Its sole arbiter is taste. With the intellect or the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth (58:480).

A. E. Houseman said that he "could no more define poetry than a terrier can define a rat." Rather, he thought, "We both recognized the object by the symptoms which it

provokes in us." His response, as the terrier's to the rat, is physical. There are three possible manifestations of the response. The first is goose bumps in which, if he happened to be shaving when a poem came to mind, the "skin bristles so (the) razor ceases to act." This is accompanied by "a shiver down the spine." The second is a "constriction of the throat and a precipitation of water to the eyes." Of the third possible response, he wrote:

> There is a third which I can only describe by borrowing a phrase from one of Keat's last letters, where he says, speaking of Fanny Brawne, 'everything that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear.' The seat of this sensation is the pit of the stomach (29:46).

Houseman believed that "Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it" (29:35).

C. Day Lewis also thought in terms of the response when he gave this answer to the question, "What is the use of poetry?" "Poetry is a special way of using words in order to create a special effect upon the reader and to light up the world for him" (40:3). Although he does not clarify just what that effect is, it is that same quality of exciting a response that is so often noted by those who write

about poetry. There is an echo of Shelley's apprehension and of Eliot's re-ordered experience in the phrase "light up the world."

Mark Van Doren in the preface to his explicated anthology Enjoying Poetry had this to say about the problem of defining "poetry:"

> I would rather say what poetry does than what it is. Like love and death, it cannot be defined except by those who have no wish to define it. It can only be described in terms of what particular poems accomplish--this one, that one, and as many more as we have time and breath to praise (72:x).

Matthew Arnold had earlier expressed the same idea of inadequacy of definition and had expressed a similar substitute:

> Critics give themselves great labour to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much better simply to have recourse to concrete examples;--to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality, and to say: The characters of a high quality of poetry are what is expressed there. They are far better recognized by being felt in the verse of the master, than by being perused in the prose of the critic (58:493).

Hopefully this point of view justifies the anthology that it is a part of this study.

Other writers who were not also poets have written of the recognition of poetry in terms of the response of the reader. I. A. Richards gave this as the test of poetry:

> . . . Only genuine poetry will give to the reader who approaches it in the proper manner a response which is as passionate, noble, and serene as the experience of the poet, the master of speech because he is the master of experience itself (58:514).

Whether or not the experience of the poet, the basis of the poem, is communicated to the reader and excites a like response in him, seems to be a primary element in judging poetic quality.

Earnest recognized only two fundamental elements in poetry--emotional intensity and music. "The total musical effect of a poem is a blend of rhythm; word sound, type and frequency of rhyme, or lack of rhyme" (14:30).

Clement Wood in his book Poets' Handbook has given a definition of poetry that emphasizes the response and makes that the differentiating factor between verse and poetry. He indicates first the characteristics that are shared:

> Verse, in our culture, is words arranged with repetition in their accent rhythm, which tends toward uniformity or regularity, rather than toward variety. The other repetitions referred to may be present; but they are regarded as ornaments merely. The essence of our verse and poetry is repetition of accent rhythm (78:3).

He then continues, to a degree echoing what others have said, but expanding upon the personal implications of his definition:

> The distinction here is: Do the verses produce a deep emotional response, or not? If not, they remain mere verse; if they do, they are properly labeled poetry. The qualifying "deep" leaves each reader to decide for himself how much of an emotional response he requires, to allocate or promote verse into the charmed inner circle of poetry. Clearly the only person who can decide whether or not any given group of verses is poetry--to <u>you</u>, that is--is yourself (78:11).

So, if I may be permitted to paraphrase the old saw, one man's verse is another man's poetry.

Eleanor Farjeon has written a poem about the nature of poetry. It is included here as her definition.

> What is Poetry? Who knows?
> Not the rose, but the scent of the rose;
> Not the sky, but the light in the sky;
> Not the fly, but the gleam of the fly;
> Not the sea, but the sound of the sea;
> Not myself, but what makes me
> See, hear, and feel something that prose
> Cannot: And what it is, who knows? (3:186)

II. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE SPECIALISTS

Recent writers have given lists of elements or qualities considered by them to be necessary in poetry appropriate for children. Many of the qualities that are listed

as essential to choice for presentation to children recall discussions already noted about the nature of poetry.

May Hill Arbuthnot, a frequently cited authority on children's literature, has indicated in her book Children and Books three essential qualities--"melody and movement," "words that define with accurate perfection," and content that appeals both to the emotions and the intellect (3:188). To aid the adult who is responsible for selecting poetry to present to children, Arbuthnot has formulated these three questions as a test of appropriateness and quality:

> When we choose a new poem for children we may well test it by asking ourselves these questions. First, does it sing--with good rhythm, true unforced rhymes, and a happy compatibility of sound and subject--whether it is nonsense verse or narrative or lyric poetry? Second, is the diction distinguished--with words that are unhackneyed, precise, and memorable? Third, does the subject matter of the poem invest the strange or the everyday experiences of life with new importance and richer meaning? When a poem does these three things, it is indeed good poetry--it may add to the child's day one brief moment of laughter, or give him a new dream to dream over in solitude, or leave him with a sharpened awareness of life (3:188-89).

The "happy compatibility of sound and subject" certainly recalls Coleridge's idea of the harmonious whole, all parts

contributing to total meaning. Point number three is reminiscent of Shelley's heightened apprehension and Eliot's enlargened consciousness.

Nina Willis Walter in her book Let Them Write Poetry listed six principles of selection. Even though she was primarily concerned with stimulating a creative response, the points she makes are equally valid when the experience with the poem is the end, rather than the means to an end. These principles of selection are: (1) brevity, (2) simplicity of idea so that the poem will not demand an emotional or intellectual response beyond the maturity of the child's understanding or experience, (3) simplicity of phrasing and diction, (4) concrete imagery, (5) representation of an experience that will be recognized with pleasure, and (6) simplicity of pattern (75:23). Simplicity of pattern is less important as a criteria of selection when poetry appreciation only is the goal, she indicated.

Separately from the principles of selection, Walter also listed ten standards of evaluation that reveal "the essential qualities of poetry." These qualities are: (1) imagination--for without it, "there is only cleverness," (2) emotion, (3) idea, (4) universality, (5) unity--a

central idea expressed in a single point of view with a single emotional effect," (6) rhythm, (7) concreteness--"relate the unknown to the familiar," (8) pattern, (9) intensity--"Intensity of emotional response to experience, intensity of imagination, and intensity of rhythm help to distinguish poetry from prose," and (10) artistic significance or impact (75:142-44). Elaborating on the final quality, Walter states:

> Artistic significance includes and transcends the other qualities of poetry. . . . Poetry which has artistic significance is original, displays awareness and insight, and bears the stamp of the author's personality (75:144).

Walter also gave the qualities of poetry that appeal to children; qualities that might well be a summation of the above criteria and qualities. Those appealing qualities are "a picturesqueness based upon imagery that makes a definite, unforgettable impression upon the mind" and "an experience which is shared or can be shared by the reader" (75:22).

Maxine Thompson, in an article in Elementary English based on her thesis for a Master's degree, suggested twelve "Criteria for Selection of Poems." She recognized that not

all twelve qualities will be present in all poems, but thought the list would give the teacher some basis on which to make a critical choice. The qualities listed by Thompson are:

1. Rhythm and rhyme. 'Poetry is really spoken melody and rhythm is its primary ingredient . . . . Children also want rhyme in poetry and so most of the poems presented to them should be rhyming ones.'

2. Melody and movement. 'Melody and movement may suggest action or establish mood. Movement is the beat, the rhythmic pattern of words.'

3. Repetition.

4. Stimulation to imagination.

5. Dramatic appeal.

6. Unusual or picturesque words. 'Children enjoy words which picture sound or motion.'

7. Everyday happenings. 'Poetry intended to please children must be concerned with things that interest them.'

8. Humor. 'Humorous poetry is a good bridge from Mother Goose to more serious poetry.'

9. Emotional appeal.

10. Guessing element. The idea of what happened next which need not be answered within the poem, but instead may be left to the reader or listener to resolve for himself.

11. Sensory appeal. 'Sensory appeal includes visual and auditory and kinesthetic imagery as well as imagery of taste, touch, and smell.'

12. Subject matter--the child's world. 'The child needs good poetry to interpret the experiences of his everyday world with its work and play and to heighten and enrich those experiences' (68:806).

These twelve points include many over-lapping groups, such as listing dramatic appeal separately from emotional appeal and guessing element. It is evident that even though this list is longer, essentially the same qualities that are recognized as criteria by other children's literature specialists are included here.

C. D. Lewis has suggested to young people in his book Poetry For You that they test or judge a poem by asking themselves questions about it. Does it thrill you? Is it honest emotion, not sentimentality? Does the imagery contribute to the poem as a whole? Does the sound contribute to meaning (40:112-115)?

The consideration of children's interests was the basis of choice indicated by Richard Nelson in his article "Choosing Poems to Help Children Like Poetry." He states that the action should "zip along," there should be a clear

story line, description should be held to a minimum, there should be either nonsense humor or child experience, and the vocabulary should be simple enough not to stand in the way of communication. "Simple vocabulary may cloak complex ideas" (49:62).

III. FORMULATING CRITERIA

All this gives background about the nature of poetry in general, but the problem approached here is the selection of poetry for first grade. Before establishing, actually re-phrasing or re-grouping, the critical criteria according to the purposes of this study, let us explore the limitations as they were stated in the problem. What then are the specific limitations or considerations of selection of poetry for first grade children?

The first response might be that the vocabulary of poetry should be limited, as is the vocabulary of the first grader. Vocabulary limitations, however necessary they might be to beginning readers, are less than obvious for listeners when one realizes that the average first grader comes to school with a vocabulary of 24,000 words and proceeds to learn about 5,000 words per year through each year

of school (32:33). Good judgment would indicate that the child might even be more interested in poetry that would stretch or expand his vocabulary, rather than remaining within its imagined boundaries. It appears that there is a greater danger of alienating the child to poetry by limiting vocabulary rather than by expanding it, thus exposing him to the richness of words that he may not as yet have encountered.

It has been recognized that it is really not essential to understand all the words to enjoy, to experience, a poem. As Richards, in writing about the reading of poetry to give the words the fullness of sound, said of sound as separated from meaning:

> The answer is that even before the words have been intellectually understood and the thoughts they occasion formed and followed, the movement and sound of the words is playing deeply and intimately upon the interests. How this happens is a matter which has yet to be successfully investigated, but that it happens no sensitive reader of poetry doubts. A good deal of poetry and even some great poetry exists . . . in which the sense of the words can be <u>almost</u> entirely missed or neglected without loss. . . . But the plain fact that the relative importance of grasping the sense of the words may vary . . . is enough for our purpose here (58:510).

Houseman, too, agreed that poetry need not all be understood intellectually (29:36-40).

But Richards and Houseman were not writing about children. Would specialists recommend consulting the recognized vocabulary lists to help decide if the words were within the child's understanding even though the most recent list was done in 1945 (41:156)?

They certainly would not.

McVickar in the Grade Teacher wrote this: "A teacher who worries about a 'controlled vocabulary' is not a friend to poetry. Words and sounds, new ones and old ones, they are all there and this is the challenge" (46:126).

L'Engle in her article "The Danger of Wearing Glass Slippers" in Elementary English was even more emphatic.

> The more limited our language is, the more limited we are; the more limited the literature we give to our children, the more limited their capacity to respond, and, therefore, in their turn, to create. The more our vocabulary is controlled (and the very word controlled is a frightening one) the less we will be able to think for ourselves (39:107).

Arbuthnot in Children and Books echoes the sentiments of Richards and Houseman about words and meaning.

> 'But this is all wrong,' say the earnest pedagogues. 'It is dangerous to encourage children to respond to words they do not understand. Words should convey meaning.' Of course they should, but not all meaning is factual. Sometimes words include a mood or feeling

> which cannot be wholly accounted for by their literal meanings but results from their sound, combined with their associative meaning (3:160).

Controlled vocabulary, then, is not as important a factor in determining the selection of poetry as might have been guessed. Rather, it seems almost a minor consideration.

The second logical limitation in the problem of selecting poetry to use with first grade is the generally accepted concept of the limited experimental background of the first grade child. Again, this seems less obvious when one realizes the wide variety of vicarious experiences the modern day child has had with television and movies. The maturity of the emotional response to any experience, vicarious or personal, seems a more valid limitation. But even this limitation is modified by the understanding that the experience need not be the same for all the readers or listeners of any poem. As Wimsatt wrote after discussing the many possible levels of interpretation of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," in a statement that is applicable to all poetry:

> Each reader will experience the poem at his own level of experience or at several. A good story poem is like a stone thrown into a pond, into our minds, where ever widening concentric circles of meaning go out. . . . (58:400)

So whatever the level of experience of the listener, each person interprets in terms of his own experience.

An example of this wide range of interpretations might well be shown in a discussion of E. E. Cummings "Chanson Innocents" which is included in this anthology. For convenience, it is repeated here:

Chanson Innocente

in Just
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old balloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing
from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's
spring
and
the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee (42:324)

An adult reader or listener, aware that the "goat-footed balloonman" is Pan, the Greek god of fertility who plays upon a pipe of reeds, perhaps understands the poem at the level intended by the author. Children, however, can respond to and enjoy the imaginative use of language--"mud-luscious," "puddle-wonderful," "eddieandbill," and "betty-andisbel." The mention of "marbles and piracies" and "hop-scotch and jump-rope" will have meaning to them; they may not notice, much less question that the boys are running and the girls are dancing away from these activities. The first-grader will respond to those elements that have meaning for him; the adult may perceive a quite different meaning in the same poem.

And who shall say that one is more "correct" than the other? As T. S. Eliot wrote about the intellectual approach to poetry that wrings and assigns every shred of meaning from each word or image, an approach that he calls "the lemon squeezer school of criticism:"

> The first danger is that of assuming that there must be just one interpretation of the poem as a whole, that must be right. . . . The second danger . . . is that of assuming that the interpretation of a poem, if valid, is necessarily an account of what the author consciously or unconsciously was trying to do (15:126).

That the child does respond is the important thing, that he may not be responding in the same way or to the same elements as an adult might is unimportant.

Once a poem has become part of a child's experience, even though his understanding or appreciation of it at first might have been a response to the music and mood of the poem and not to the meaning, it may be that later experiences are enlightened by that same poem and that the poem itself gains expanded meaning. Lewis put it this way:

> Yet--and this is the point--it is not necessary to understand the poem fully in order to be moved by it. We may have enjoyed a poem for years, before we have some experience in our own lives which gives us the clue to its full meaning (40:72).

Rumer Godden also commented on this changing understanding through increased experience: "A poem can change mysteriously: sometimes it will seem to have nothing to say at all, and then suddenly will shine out in its full meaning" (21:169).

A third special consideration or limitation for first grade mentioned in the statement of the problem is the interests of children of that age.

Ray in her study using poetry as motivation for painting discovered ". . . the four elements which usually have special interest to children: surprise, action, humor, and mystery" (53:57).

Another study entitled "Areas of Reading Interest Demonstrated by 275 First-Grade Pupils" listed those reading interests, in order of descending interest, as make believe, happiness, humor, adventure, history, family, anxiety, and today's world (56). Although reading independently is quite a different thing from listening to poetry, there are clues here that should be kept in mind.

The fourth special consideration or limitation indicated is the short attention span of the first grade child. It would seem only logical that this might be met by presenting poems that are also short.

Where then does this place the first grade teacher who is attempting to select poetry to present to her class? Are there no limits or guide lines to help her?

Criterion I

First, the poem must give pleasure to both the first graders and their teacher. Unless a teacher truly responds

to a poem she will be unable to kindle a response in her pupils. "Pleasure" is an elastic word that may be expanded to include responses other than pleasant awareness; it may even be stretched to cover the hollow loneliness in Dorothy Aldis' "When I Was Lost."

> Underneath my belt
> My stomach was a stone.
> Sinking was the way I felt
> And hollow.
> And Alone. (6:117)

Shelley in his "A Defense of Poetry" gave this expanded definition of the many shades of pleasure one may receive from poetry:

> It is difficult to define pleasure in its highest sense, the definition involving a number of apparent paradoxes. For, from an inexplicable defect of harmony in the constitution of human nature, the pain of the inferior is frequently connected with the pleasures of the superior portions of our being. Sorrow, terror, anguish, despair itself, are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good. Our sympathy in tragic fiction depends on this principle; tragedy delights by affording a shadow of that pleasure which exists in pain. This is the source also of the melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. . . (60:35-36).

Pleasure, then, can mean an intense emotional or even physical response on the part of the listener or reader.

If the teacher truly understands and appreciates poetry, this criterion of giving pleasure is all that need be mentioned. The poets quoted earlier in the first section of this chapter recognized pleasure both as a goal and a test for poetry.

However, it is admitted that not all share this assurance of their own good taste, so further points may need to be examined.

Criterion II

Second, if there must be a second, the poem must have musical language. This includes rhythm, without which there is no poetry, rhyme, and all the other elements of sound and sense. Definitions of these elements are a part of the next chapter in this study.

I share with Patrick Groff the belief that most poetry for first grade should have easily identifiable rhyme.

> Poetry is more difficult to understand without rhymes. They assist the listener and reader to grasp the total design of the poem. The use of rhymes can make intelligible what otherwise could be a baffling experience (23:762).

Rhyme has this additional advantage for a child--"it appeal(s) to his relatively limited powers of attention" (23:762).

Criterion III

Third, the poem must communicate some experience or essence of experience that the child can share, but communicate it in a way that is more than just observation. Whether one chooses to call it heightened awareness, expanded consciousness, enlightened apprehension, or re-ordered experience, the desired effect upon the listener is essentially the same.

Criterion IV

A fourth point that I consider vital, even though it may be more difficult to defend and to apply, is that a poem should speak to, not at, the listener. Too many poems written for children seem to talk at them, as if from a superior point of view, rather than to them, a person speaking to persons (to paraphrase Wordsworth.)

This list could be expanded considerably, but that would seem to defeat the purpose of this study. After

reviewing what poets, critics, and children's literature specialists have written about identifying or recognizing poetry, it seems that these four points are the essential ones. Further listing and enumerating of specific qualities would be more likely to build fences than to open gates.

IV. DEMONSTRATION OF APPLICATION

In order to demonstrate how those four criteria have been applied in selecting poetry for the anthology, let us examine briefly a poem that is not included.

TREES

Harry Behn

Trees are the kindest things I know,
They do no harm, they simply grow

And spread a shade for sleepy cows,
And gather birds among their boughs.

They give us fruit in leaves above,
And wood to make our houses of,

And leaves to burn on Hallowe'en,
And in the Spring new buds of green.

They are the first when day's begun
To touch the beams of morning sun,

They are the last to hold the light
When evening changes into night,

And when a moon floats on the sky
They hum a drowsy lullaby

Of sleepy children long ago . . .
Trees are the kindest things I know. (6:368)

First, and this is enough to eliminate it, this poem does not give me pleasure and I doubt that it would give pleasure to children.

Second, even though it does have a definite rhythm, rhyme, and some other elements of musical language, the total effect is monotonous rather than imaginative. The rhyme is forced in several places--as "leaves above" with "houses of" and "Hallowe'en" with "buds of green."

As one who has read Alexander Pope's "An Essay on Criticism," I am aware here of not only the kind of cliche Pope warned against, but also the same heroic couplet form in which Pope wrote.

Third, even though I have shared the experiences enumerated by the poet, his poem does not bring me any new understanding or awareness of those experiences.

Fourth, he seems to be talking down to me. I just do not believe him when he says "Trees are the kindest things I know" and that causes me to doubt the sincerity of the poetic experience that caused the poem to be written.

CHAPTER III

DEFINITIONS, ANTHOLOGY, AND EXPLICATION

Rather than including a list of defined terms earlier in the study, the terms used in the explications are developed here as an integral part of the anthology.

I. DEFINITIONS

Rhythm

Certainly a necessary beginning to any discussion of terms for poetry is some definition of that instinct recognized by Aristotle. Essentially rhythm is a patterned repetition of stress and time (65:137; 74:63; 8:562).

Rumer Godden said this about the relationship of rhythm and poetry:

> What it (poetry) says could not possibly be said in prose because a poem has an intrinsic built-in rhythm, which is why it is poetry. It is this rhythm that makes it not only memorable but rememorable (21:168).

Chad Walsh called rhythm "the most obvious characteristic that distinguishes poetry from prose" (74:62).

Nina Willis Walter has this to say about the child's awareness of rhythm in poetry:

> We should not make of poetry an exercise in scansion. . . . For rhythm is something that he feels rather than something he knows about. Rhythm is a natural manifestation of an emotional state, an expression of an emotional consciousness (75:112).

Meter

Closely related to rhythm is the term meter. In the discussion of poetry meter is used to mean the systemetized repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables (65:139; 8:562).

According to Stageberg and Anderson, "meter performs three functions in poetry: (1) it provides rhythmic pleasure; (2) it controls tempo and movement; (3) it gives emphasis to particular words" (65:146).

Meter, then, is an aspect of rhythm, but not the whole of it.

Verse and Free Verse

In Chapter Two of this study in a quote from Wood, verse is defined as "words arranged with repetition in their accent rhythm, which tends toward uniformity or regularity, rather than toward variety" (78:3). Free verse, then, is verse that does not conform to a pattern of uniformity or regularity, either of rhythm or rhyme.

"Chanson Innocente" by E. E. Cummings, discussed earlier in this study, is an example of free verse.

Rhyme

Rhyme is the correspondence or sameness of end sounds of words. Brooks and Warren define rhyme as "the identity in the rhyming words of the accented vowels and of all consonants and vowels following" (8:565).

According to Stageberg and Anderson rhyme has three functions in poetry: (1) "it provides musical pleasure," (2) "it sets off the lines," and (3) "it helps to bind the poem together" (65:161).

Masculine rhyme. Sometimes the end rhyme is a single syllable as in this short poem "A Big Turtle" by an unknown author:

> A big turtle sat on the end of a log,
> Watching a tadpole turn into a frog. (6:79)

This single syllable rhyme is called masculine rhyme (74:95).

Feminine rhyme. Double rhyme involving two syllables, the last of which is unaccented, is called feminine rhyme (74:95). Among other characteristics of musical language,

the first three lines of the first stanza of Rhoda Bacmeister's "Galoshes" exhibit this kind of feminine rhyme:

> Susie's galoshes
> Make splishes and sploshes
> And slooshes and sloshes,
> As Susie steps slowly
> Along in the slush. (2:157)

Triple rhyme. Rhyme can also be triple, involving three syllables. This is rarely used in anything but humorous or nonsense verse (74:95). Although it is internal rhyme rather than end-of-the-line rhyme, the use of "kickety, rickety" in the fourth line from Rowena Bennett's "The Witch of Willowby Wood" exhibits triple rhyme:

> There once was a witch of Willowby Wood,
> and a weird wild witch was she, with hair that
> was snarled and hands that were gnarled, and a
> kickety, rickety knee. . . (59:228-229).

The two unaccented syllables that follow the accented identical vowel contribute what might be called a humorous rhythm to the line.

Slant rhyme. Not all rhyme need have the identity of sound discussed above; it can be partial rhyme. Sometimes there is just a correspondence of the final consonant sounds, but not of accented vowel sounds, which may be

called slant rhyme. Emily Dickinson in "Snake" used this kind of rhyme in the first stanza with the sound of the letter "s":

> A narrow fellow in the grass
> Occasionally rides;
> You may have met him,--did you not?
> His notice sudden is. (70:467)

Slant rhyme may also be called consonance. "By the usual rules of consonance any two words ending in stressed vowels automatically consonate: me, day, construe, ago" (74:95). In other words, rather than sharing the same consonant after different accented vowels, they share the lack of a consonant. The second stanza of Dorothy Aldis' "Flies" has this kind of consonance or slant rhyme:

> And I am quite certain
> If I were a fly
> I'd leave my home and go
> Walk on the sky. (7:99)

There is masculine rhyme between "fly" and "sky", but "go" is also a slant rhyme with them because of the accented vowel "o".

Bracket rhyme. Another type of partial rhyme is bracket rhyme, in which "the consonants before the stressed vowels and everything after the stressed vowels are identical,

but the stressed vowels themselves are not the same: mile, mull; retain, ton; seeing, saying" (74:96). The internal rhyme (rhyme within a line) of the second line of "Galoshes" exhibits bracket rhyme:

> Susie's galoshes
> Make splishes and sploshes

Only the vowel is different in the words "splishes" and "sploshes."

Rhyme, then, may be of many kinds. Most often it is used to mean single syllable or masculine rhyme, double syllable or feminine rhyme, or triple syllable rhyme. Partial rhyme may be slant rhyme, or consonance, with identical consonants following different accented vowels. A second type of partial rhyme is bracket rhyme, with identical consonants preceding and following different accented vowels.

Consonance

Although Walsh uses the terms slant rhyme and consonance interchangeably, consonance is also used by others to indicate the repetition of a consonant in initial, internal, or terminal positions. This second definition,

differentiating consonance from slant rhyme, is the one applied in this study. These lines by Dorothy Aldis in "Hiding" illustrate consonance as it is used here:

> Then I laughed out aloud
> And I wiggled my toes
> And Father said--"Look, dear,
> I wonder if those
>
> Toes could be Benny's.

Both the letters "l" and "d" are repeated enough times to be identified as consonance.

Alliteration

Repetition of beginning consonants has a term of its own--alliteration. Valine Hobbs in "One Day When We Went Walking" has used alliteration:

> One day when we went walking,
> I found a dragon's tooth,
> A dreadful dragon's tooth,
> "A locust thorn," said Ruth. (1:306)

The alliteration of the "w's" in the first line and the "dr's" in the second and third lines adds to the dramatic quality of the poem.

According to Stageberg and Anderson alliteration performs two functions in poetry: (1) "it provides the aural pleasure of repeated sounds," and (2) "it helps to structure

the poem" (65:114). They elaborate about the structuring of a poem with alliteration:

> This it accomplishes through the added emphasis that alliterated words usually have. Such emphasis may serve various purposes: 1. It may strengthen the effect of the key words. . . . 2. It may call attention to a contrast. . . . 3. It may link words that are related in an image, thought, or feelings (65:117).

Repetition of consonant sounds, then, may be either consonance, with positioning anywhere in the words, or alliteration, with the repetition as the initial sound of the words.

Assonance

Repetition of a vowel sound is called assonance. Chad Walsh calls it "the opposite of alliteration" (74:94). "Mice" by Rose Fyleman has repetition of what many call "long i" in the first two and last two lines:

I think mice
Are rather nice.

. . . . . .

But I think mice
Are nice. (2:55)

Assonance of similarity. In addition to the most frequently used definition of assonance already given,

Stageberg, and Anderson recognize three variations. One of these variations is assonance of similarity, in which the "vowel sequence . . . moves along only a limited section of the scale, as in

On that lone shore loud moans the sea." (65:122)

Stageburg and Anderson classified vowels by frequency of vibration, but an equally valid and easier to demonstrate method is by the location within the mouth where the vowel sound is formed. The following chart showing placement is adapted from Robertson and Cassidy's The Development of Modern English:

	Front	Center	Back
High	beet bit		boot foot
Mid	bait bet	schwa, as in tuba but	boat bought
Low	fairy bat	aunt (not ant)	doll bar

The chart may be read counter-clockwise from "beet" at high front to "boot" at high back to indicate high to low frequency of vibration.

One can demonstrate this kind of proximity by saying or mouthing the vowel sounds.

The chart does not include the vowel diphthongs that are the combination of two vowel sounds in one syllable. The vowel diphthongs are found in these words:

buy--the vowels of aunt (not ant) and bit

bough--the vowels of aunt (not ant) and foot

boy--the vowels of boat and bit

few--the vowels of bit and boot

bay--the vowels of bait and bit

blow--boat plus foot (55:75)

The diphthongs also may be demonstrated by mouthing or saying.

Assonance of similarity may be found in this stanza of "wishes" by Rose Fyleman, particularly in the first two and the last lines:

I wish I liked rice pudding,
I wish I were a twin,
I wish someday a real live fairy
Would just come walking in. (19:33)

Except for "would", all vowels sounds are made well forward in the mouth.

Assonance of contrast. A second variation of assonance is assonance of contrast, in which "a series of contrasted vowels (are) chosen from the top and bottom of the vowel scale, . . . as in noon-day dreams and sedate and slow and gay" (65:112). Assonance of contrast may be found in Heinrich Heine's "A Pine Tree Stands So Lonely":

> A pine tree stands so lonely
> In the North where the high winds blow,
> He sleeps; and the whitest blanket
> Wraps him in ice and snow. (27:734)

Most of the vowels are made well forward in the mouth, so the "long o" sound in "so," "lonely," "blow," and "snow" made at the back adds emphasis to those words and heightens the effect they have upon the reader.

Assonance of pattern. The third variation is assonance of pattern in which "the arrangement of assonated vowels (is) in a fairly definite patterning, as in Shakespeare's

> Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew."
> (65:122)

To some degree assonance of pattern may be found in these lines from "Snake" by Emily Dickinson:

> He likes a boggy acre
> A floor too cool for corn. (70:467)

So assonance, too, may be of more than one kind. Whether it is the common variety, assonance of similarity, assonance of contrast, or assonance of pattern, the effect on the reader or listener is one of pleasure.

> One of the functions of assonance in poetry is to furnish musical pleasure. From the psychology of music it is known that musical tone is a direct emotional stimulus, setting up in the body the physical changes that underlie or accompany emotion. Such an affective condition caused by tonal stimulation is a general mood. In poetry this mood can be transformed into more specific feelings by the meanings of the words and their connotative and emotive charge. This emotional power possessed by the vowels of poetry, as musical tones, can be intensified by repetition (65:120-121).

Cacophony

Before going on to the use of words in poetry, two other elements of sound that affect the rhythm of the poem and the emotions of the listener or reader should be discussed. An important element of the sound of consonants is cacophony, the effect of consonants "which cause(s) a strain in pronunciation and a slowing of rhythmical tempo" (8:564). Consonants that contribute to cacophony are all the stops (b, p, d, t, g, and k) and the affricates (the j in judge and the ch in church.) The first stanza of Tennyson's "The Eagle" is a good example of cacophony:

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands. (70:345)

The forced pauses caused by the very nature of the consonants contribute to the mood and meaning of the poem.

Euphony

In contrast to cacophony is euphony, which contributes ease and smoothness to the sound and sense of the poem. The nasals (m, n, and ng), the glides (r, y, and w), and the lateral (l) all contribute to euphony, in which "consonant combinations easily pronounced give a sense of ease and tend to speed up the rhythmical tempo" (8:564; 55:59). Emily Dickinson's "Morning" demonstrates euphony:

Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were tall as they?
Has it feet like water lilies?
Has it feathers like a bird:
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I've never heard?
Oh some scholar, oh some sailor,
Oh some wise man from the skies,
Please to tell a little pilgrim
Where the place called morning lies. (57:129)

All the "m's," "n's," "l's," and "r's" contribute to the ease and smoothness of the poem.

It must be remembered through all of this discussion of the contribution of sound to meaning that it is a combination of sound and meaning that affects the listener. "Murmur" and "murder" may sound a great deal alike, but the meaning is far different, and so the effect upon the listener is different. "Murmur" may sound soft and loving, but "murder" sounds sinister and threatening.

Also, the discussion does not mean to say that the poet contrives the patterns in an intellectual (as opposed to emotional or sensory) act of composition. As Stageberg and Anderson wrote about alliteration, in a statement that is equally true of the other elements of sound:

> Our study of alliterative patterns, however, does not imply that the poet deliberately chooses particular patterns in creating his verse. On the contrary, the poet writes by ear, adjusting his words until the total sequence of sounds represents the aural effects that he desires (65:114).

Repetition

To this point the term repetition has been used only in connection with separate elements of sound, but it is a device that is used also with words, phrases, and complete lines.

The first two stanzas of "Reeds of Innocence" by Blake illustrate the repetition of a word:

> Piping down the valleys wild,
> Piping songs of pleasant glee,
> On a cloud I saw a child,
> And he laughing said to me.
>
> 'Pipe a song about a Lamb!'
> So I piped with merry cheer.
> 'Piper, pipe that song again;'
> So I piped: he wept to hear. (50:329)

The various forms of the word "pipe" share the emphasis and rhythm gained by repetition.

Repetition of a phrase occurs in Marchette Chute's "Presents":

> I wanted a rifle for Christmas,
> I wanted a bat and a ball,
> I wanted some skates and a bicycle,
> But I didn't want mittens at all.
>
> I wanted a whistle
> And I wanted a kite,
> I wanted a pocketknife
> That shut up tight.
> I wanted some boots
> And I wanted a kit,
> But I didn't want mittens one little bit!
>
> I told them I didn't like mittens,
> I told them as plain as plain.
> I told them I didn't WANT mittens,
> And they've given me mittens again! (1:306)

The accumulative effect of the "I wanted's" together with the "I told them's" helps us understand the emotion, the disappointment, in the poem.

Repetition of a whole line can be seen in "Tired Tim" by Walter de la Mare:

> Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him.
> He lags the long bright morning through,
> Ever so tired of nothing to do;
> He moons and mopes the livelong day,
> Nothing to think about, nothing to say;
> Up to bed with his candle to creep,
> Too tired to yawn, too tired to sleep:
> Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him. (2:6)

Even though the first and last lines are the same, our sympathy for Tim is changed as we understand what it is that is "sad for him." The two lines say the same thing, but they do not mean the same thing.

Imagery

We come finally to the words used in poetry and the ideas and emotions that the words convey. Imagery is "the representation in poetry of any sense experience" (8:555). The image may be felt by any of the five senses--sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch--plus two others that are indicated by Chad Walsh: "the thermal sense (ability to

distinguish differences in temperature) and the kinesthetic sense (ability to feel bodily tensions, as when you lift a heavy weight)" (74:29).

Although it also uses another specific kind of imagery, "First Snow" by Marie Louise Allen is essentially visual imagery, appealing to the sense of sight:

> Snow makes whiteness where it falls,
> The bushes look like popcorn-balls.
> The places where I always play,
> Look like somewhere else today. (6:333)

Anyone who has ever seen the first snow fall of the year will recall and be able to visualize that scene.

The imagery that affects the sense of hearing may be felt in Bacmeister's "Galoshes" quoted earlier, but repeated here in full for convenience:

> Susie's galoshes
> Make splishes and sploshes
> And slooshes and sloshes,
> As Susie steps slowly
> Along in the slush.
>
> They stamp and they tramp
> On the ice and concrete,
> They get stuck in the muck and the mud;
> But Susie likes much best to hear
>
> The slippery slush
> As it slooshes and sloshes,
> And splishes and sploshes,
> All round her galoshes. (2:157)

One can almost hear the child walking in the slush, in the mud, on the hard ice and concrete, and in the slush once again.

The sense of smell is appealed to by the imagery in Zhenya Gay's "The World Is Full of Wonderful Smells":

> The world is full of wonderful smells,
> And you have a nose that always tells
> Of bread in the oven, hot and nice,
> Of cake being baked with lots of spice,
> Of a barn with fresh-cut hay in the mows,
> Of horses and pigs and cats and cows,
> Of a dog when he's warm and he's in the sun,
> Of applesauce and chocolate and a sugar bun.
> Wouldn't it be dreadful if you'd no nose to tell
> Of every wonderful, wonderful smell? (2:105)

The poem is almost a catalog of smells, not just those that are usually considered wonderful.

The sense of taste is affected in the first stanza of Emily Dickinson's "A Bird":

> A bird came down the walk;
> He did not know I saw;
> He bit an angle worm in halves
> And ate the fellow, raw. (2:53)

Eating a raw angle worm, even by halves, is hardly appealing to us.

The sense of touch is aroused by the imagery of John Ciardi's "Rain Sizes." The first stanza is adequate for illustration:

Rain comes in various sizes.
Some rain is as small as a mist.
It tickles your face with surprises,
And tingles as if you'd been kissed. (6:112)

Thermal imagery, the communication of temperature, is found in "A Pine Tree Stands So Lonely" by Heine. The contribution of the vowel sounds to the effect of the poem on the reader has already been noted:

A pine tree stands so lonely
In the North where the high winds blow,
He sleeps; and the whitest blanket
Wraps him in ice and snow.

He dreams--dreams of a palm tree
That far in an Orient land,
Languishes, lonely and drooping,
Upon the burning sand. (27:734)

The poem communicates both the cold felt by the pine tree and the heat felt by the palm.

Kinesthetic imagery, the communication of bodily tension, is found in "A Swing Song" by Willian Allingham. The first two stanzas are adequate for illustration:

Swing, swing,
Sing, sing,
Here! my throne and I am a king!
Swing, sing,
Swing, sing,
Farewell, earth, for I'm on the wing!

Low, high,
Here I fly,
Like a bird through sunny sky;
Free, free,
Over the lea,
Over the mountain, over the sea!

Anyone who has ever ridden in a swing gets caught up in the rhythm of the poem that recalls the rhythm of swinging, and involuntarily begins the feel of "pumping" to make the swing go.

Figurative Language

The imagery discussed to this point has resulted from description or from other elements inherent in the poem. Sometimes poets use a more direct means of imagery, a more direct statement of the idea to be conveyed. Such more direct comparisons are called figurative language.

Simile. A simile is the most direct kind of figurative language, as it makes a stated comparison using either "like" or "as." The second line of Allen's "The First Snow," quoted earlier in the discussion of visual imagery, is a simile: "The bushes look like popcorn balls" (6:333).

Metaphor. Metaphor is a type of figurative language in which the comparison is implied by identifying two things

with each other. Dorothy Aldis used metaphor in "Brooms" to compare trees in the rain with brooms in the scrub bucket:

> On stormy days,
> When the wind is high
> Tall trees are brooms
> Sweeping the sky.
>
> They swish their branches
> In buckets of rain,
> And swash and sweep it
> Blue again. (51:126)

The trees _are_ brooms; metaphor compares by saying that one thing _is_ the other.

Personification. A special type of metaphor that attributes human characteristics to an idea or a thing is called personification (65:69). In "The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky" Vachel Lindsay personified wind:

> The Moon's the North Wind's cooky,
> He bites it, day by day,
> Until there's but a rim of scraps
> That crumble all away.
>
> The South Wind is a baker.
> He kneads clouds in his den.
> And bakes a crisp new moon _that--greedy North--Wind--eats--again_!

This technique enabled the poet to give new meaning to a natural phenomena.

Symbol. Closely related to the use of metaphor is the use of symbols. A metaphor, or other figurative language, adds to meaning by pointing out "the before unapprehended relations of things" (60:4). A symbol, like a metaphor, involves two things, but "a symbol may be regarded as a metaphor from which the first term has been omitted" (8:556). Symbols are things that remind us of something else, as the cross symbolizes Christianity or the flag the nation. "Symbols, then, are 'signs' pointing to meaning" (8:556).

For me, this short poem "Secrets" by Robert Frost has symbolism:

> We dance round in a ring and suppose,
> But the Secret sits in the middle and knows.
> (74:218)

"We" of course is all of us humans; "the Secret" may be God or whatever Creator or omniscient Being one recognizes. The symbol which points to meaning is "the ring." What is the ring? For a child it might suggest a circle game. To me it seems to be the cyclic nature of life: up in the morning, to bed at night, only to get up and do it all over again the next morning. On an expanded time scale it is the whole of human life: we are born, we live, we have children, we die.

But it does not end with us because the children have children, and around the ring they go. So what we "suppose" and the Secret "knows" is the use of or reason for continuing to dance around our ring. This poem says to me that we do not know the real meaning of life, and we probably will not ever know it.

The several kinds of figurative language contribute much to the total meaning of any poem. Stageberg and Anderson used figurative language to reveal the inter-relationship:

> Poetry is written in a language which makes ample use of figures of speech. Such figures, however, are seldom merely ornamental, like gargoyles on a Gothic cathedral, but instead form an integral part of what the poet has to say. They are more like the arched windows encased in stone, giving essential support to the structure and illuminating the interior with light and color (65:66).

A more current comparison might be that figurative language is not the frosting on the cake, it is instead the eggs that are added to the box of cake mix to enable it to become a cake.

Theme

In order to discuss poetry, the term theme needs to be understood. The theme of a poem is what the poem is

about, the "basic attitude or idea presented in the poem" (8:560). The theme is more than the subject of a poem, but something other than a simplified statement of a moral message received through the poem. "The theme does not give the poem its force; the poem gives the theme its force" (8:46). For example, in Lindsay's poem "The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky" it might be said that the theme is the regularity of flux and change.

Tone

Related to theme, but separate from it, is tone. Tone is to poetry what stress and intonation are to speech. It results from many elements within the poem.

> Every poem has a particular tone--the attitude (usually implied, rather than stated) of the poet toward his subject matter and the reader. It may be light-hearted or solemn, intimate or formal, humorous or serious, personal or impersonal (74:56).

To return to Lindsay's poem for an example, it could be said that the tone is calm acceptance.

So theme is what the poem is about and tone is the attitude of the speaker (the voice of the poem) towards that theme.

Denotation

Understanding of two other terms that contribute to the subtlety of meaning possible in poetry is also required --denotation and connotation.

Denotation refers to the definition of a word, "what it refers to, stands for or designates, apart from the feelings it may call up" (65:41). The denotation of the word "mother" is then a female who has had offspring.

Connotation

But words carry more meaning than that denoted, they also come to mean to us the emotions or situations of which they have been a part. Thus, "mother" means to most of us the loving security of childhood and recalls to us the way we feel about our mothers. To a person whose mother abandoned him in a garbage can and did not intend him to be found in time to live, "mother" stirs very different emotions and memories. "This aspect of words we are discussing--their flavor, emotive tone, clusters of associations, the vague memories they conjure up--is called connotation" (65:41). Connotation can be directed, focused at a choice of the many possible meanings, by context.

Stanza

The term stanza has been used in several of the definitions, so perhaps it, too, should be clarified. It has been used to mean a section of the poem set apart by spacing. Many other elements can influence the recognition of a stanza, such as rhyme scheme or number of lines, but for the purposes of this study spacing alone is identification enough.

Heroic Couplet

In the discussion of the negative choice poem "Trees" by Harry Behn, the term "heroic couplet" was used. Technically, the term identifies a stanza form that is adjacent rhyming lines of iambic pentameter. Iambic refers to an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one and pentameter means simply that there are five such iambs to a line. Usually, but not always, a heroic couplet contains a complete thought even though it is part of a larger whole.

This is not an exhaustive list of the many terms available to the discussion of poetry. It is rather a list of the terms used in this study, as they are used. These are

the concepts about poetry that I regard as important to understanding and appreciation.

Even though the techniques and devices of poetry may be defined and illustrated, the identification of those separate elements is not an end to itself. Rather, it is understanding how the separate identifiable elements contribute to the whole that is the poem. "The poetic effect depends not on the things themselves but on the kind of use the poet makes of them" (8:16).

II. ANTHOLOGY AND EXPLICATION

The poems in this anthology have been selected using the criteria established by this study. Because the poems were chosen for what they <u>are</u>, they may now be arranged by what they are <u>about</u>.

The classifications overlap in some cases, while in other instances a poem could be included in more than one category. Some poems very nearly defy classification. The classifications designated are those that would seem to be of most value or assistance to the first grade teacher.

To reiterate a limitation of this study, the comments about the poems are intended for the teacher, so that by

increased understanding or heightened awareness of the technique as a part of the whole she may be more effective in using the poems in the classroom. None of the analyses in the explications is intended to be shared with the first grade pupil.

Of course, not every occurrence of musical language, figurative speech, or imagery was cited. Rather, an effort was made to identify those elements, which could be called techniques or devices, that contribute most pleasure to the sound and sense of each poem.

This kind of choice is by nature highly personal and not truly objective. The appreciation of poetry is a response to the factors that one recognizes, sometimes only instinctively and sub-consciously. The goal of the comments is to make the teacher more conscious of those elements to which she and her students do respond.

Wind and Weather

BROOMS

Dorothy Aldis

On stormy days
  When the wind is high
Tall trees are brooms
  Sweeping the sky.

They swish their branches
  In buckets of rain,
And swash and sweep it
  Blue again. (51:126)

The metaphor in this poem, comparing trees in the rain to brooms in the scrub bucket, has already been indicated in the definitions section of this study. The appeal is largely to visual imagery, but the alliteration of "sw" in "sweeping," "swish," "swash," and "sweep" very nearly has the effect of an image that can be heard.

Even though "rain" and "again" might be pronounced with different vowels, they are still in the form of partial rhyme called slant rhyme.

RAIN

Robert Louis Stevenson

The rain is raining all around,
  It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here
  And on the ships at sea. (6:312)

The child's wish to be a part of things he has not yet experienced personally, only vicariously, is suggested in this poem. The fact that the same rain that falls on an ordinary umbrella here falls also on a far away ship makes the one holding the umbrella a kind of kindred soul with those on the ship.

In another sense, the poem indicates that there are things that happen that are beyond control. The rain, after all, falls without discrimination on both natural elements, "field and tree," and on man made things, the relatively simple "umbrella" and the complex "ship."

The visual image of the rain is reinforced by the repetition of that word.

THE SKY IS LOW

Emily Dickinson

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How someone treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem. (33:1213)

Various aspects of nature are personified in this poem. If "low" is taken to mean low-spirited rather than as in opposition to high and clear, then it, too, is one of the several manifestations of ill-humor observed. "The clouds are mean," the snow is undecided, the wind is complaining, and "the sky is low." Nature's "diadem," her symbolic crown of royal power, sometimes slips off, and so she is, as we are, not always in the best possible mood.

VERY LOVELY

Rose Fyleman

Wouldn't it be lovely if the rain came down
Till the water was quite high over all the town?
If the cabs and buses all were set afloat,
And we had to go to school in a little boat?

Wouldn't it be lovely if it still should pour
And we all went up to live on the second floor?
If we saw the butcher sailing up the hill,
And we took the letters in at the window sill?

It's been raining, raining, all the afternoon;
All these things might happen really very soon.
If we woke tomorrow and found they had begun,
Wouldn't it be glorious? Wouldn't it be fun?
(6:315)

Obviously this is a child's view of a flood, considering as "lovely" all the unusual circumstances that a flood would present. The repetition of "wouldn't it be lovely if" and then just "wouldn't it be" help us to know that the voice of the poem is not really serious. It is playing with imagination. The reader or listener is caught up in the game by the use of direct questions.

RAIN SIZES

John Ciardi

Rain comes in various sizes.
Some rain is as small as a mist.
It tickles your face with surprises,
And tingles as if you'd been kissed.

Some rain is the size of a sprinkle
And doesn't put out all the sun.
You can see the drops sparkle and twinkle,
And a rainbow comes out when it's done.

Some rain is as big as a nickle
And comes with a crash and a hiss.
It comes down too heavy to tickle.
It's more like a splash than a kiss.

When it rains the right size and you're wrapped in
Your rainclothes, it's fun out of doors.
But run home before you get trapped in
The big rain that rattles and roars. (6:112)

This poem about progressively larger degrees of rain uses several kinds of imagery to impress the different effects of the different kinds of rain.

The touch imagery of suggesting that a "mist" is like a kiss has already been noted in the definitions section in the discussion of the different kinds of imagery.

The second stanza is visual imagery, reminding the reader of the "sparkle" and "twinkle" of the rain in the sun. The third, "too heavy to tickle," is imagery that appeals to hearing: "It comes with a crash and a hiss." The fourth, "that rattles and roars," might be said to suggest kinesthetic imagery as when the thunder sounds and the lightening strikes we feel the vibration through our bodies.

It is interesting to note that in each stanza one rhyming pair is single syllable rhyme and the other pair is double syllable rhyme.

WHITE SHEEP, WHITE SHEEP

Anonymous

White sheep, white sheep,
On a blue hill,
When the wind stops
You all stand still.
When the wind blows
You walk away slow.
White sheep, white sheep,
Where do you go? (2:156)

Sometimes attributed to Christina Rossetti, this poem is about clouds without ever mentioning them. The use of metaphor, calling the clouds seen against the far hill sheep, is rather like the child's game of finding familiar figures in the clouds. The appeal is visual imagery.

The conversational quality of the poem is achieved by speaking directly to the "white sheep." We wonder, too, "where do you go?"

Repetition of the phrases "white sheep" and "when the wind," and the alliteration of "stops" with "stand still" and "wind" with "walk away" contribute to the communication of music and movement by the poem.

WIND ON THE HILL

A. A. Milne

No one can tell me,
Nobody knows,
Where the wind comes from,
Where the wind goes.

It's flying from somewhere
As fast as it can,
I couldn't keep up with it,
Not if I ran.

But if I stopped holding
The string of my kite
It would blow with the wind
For a day and a night.

And then when I found it,
Wherever it blew,
I should know that the wind
Had been going there too.

So then I could tell them
Where the wind goes . . .
But where the wind comes from
Nobody knows. (47:93)

The wish to understand the world we live in is the theme of this poem. The little boy can think of a way to find an answer to one of his questions, but the other remains a mystery.

Repetition of "where the wind" and "nobody knows" emphasize that mystery. The assonance in the repeated sound "o" in "no," "goes," "nobody," and "knows" accents those words and adds to the mystery.

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Christina Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling
  The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads
  The wind is passing by. (2:153)

This poem seems to say that we do not always need to see things in order to know that they are there. The conversational tone directly involves the reader or listener by directing the question at him.

To achieve rhyme the "I" and "you" of the second lines of both stanzas are transposed. This transposition seems to emphasize our mutual lack of knowledge.

O WIND, WHY DO YOU NEVER REST

Christina Rossetti

O wind, why do you never rest,
  Wandering, whistling to and fro,
Bringing rain out of the west,
  From the dim north bringing snow?
(2:156)

This four line poem is a question directed at the wind. The repetition of the sound of "w" in "wind," "why," "wandering," "whistling," and "west" is suggestive of the sound of the wind. The euphony of the repeated consonants "w," "m," "n," "ng," and "r" suggest the apparent ease and lack of effort with which the wind moves. The result is very nearly imagery that appeals to our sense of hearing.

THE WIND

Robert Louis Stevenson

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass--
  O wind, a-blowing all day long,
  O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all--
  O wind, a-blowing all day long,
  O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
  O wind, a-blowing all day long,
  O wind, that sings so loud a song! (51:124)

In this poem the wind is addressed directly, even though it is known only by its actions. The child seeks to relate what he does not know to himself, and so wonders if the wind is "just a stronger child than me."

Repetition of the last two lines of each stanza adds to the musical effect of the poem.

WIND SONG

Carl Sandburg

Long ago I learned how to sleep,
In an old apple orchard where the wind swept by
counting its money and throwing it away,
In a wind-gaunt orchard where the limbs forked out
and listened or never listened at all
In a passel of trees where the branches trapped the
wind into whistling, "who, who are you?"
I slept with my head in an elbow on a summer after-
noon and there I took a sleep lesson.
There I went away saying; I know why they sleep,
I know how they trap the tricky winds.
Long ago I learned how to listen to the singing wind
and how to forget and how to hear the deep whine,
Slapping and lapsing under the day blue and the night stars:
Who, who are you?

Who can ever forget
listening to the wind go by
counting its money
and throwing it away? (33:1649)

This free verse poem should be used late in the school year after the children have had considerable experience with poetry.

Children will be interested in the idea of sleeping in a tree and in the ridiculous thought of the wind having money and throwing it away.

Euphony results from the many repetitions of "l," "n," and "r" as in the first line: "Long ago I learned how to sleep." The poem moves slowly and easily.

The juxtaposition of the consonants in "slapping" and "lapsing" produces an interesting kind of consonance.

The true meaning of this poem may elude me, but it does produce in me a mood that thinks it understands. It would seem that the children would experience this same kind of intuitive understanding also.

DOWN! DOWN!

Eleanor Farjeon

Down, down!
Yellow and brown
The leaves are falling over the town.
(2:174)

This is visual imagery; we see the colorful leaves floating from the trees.

It is interesting to notice that in the poem the leaves are falling "over the town" rather than on the ground or from the tree. One receives an image of a town blanketed by leaves.

There is assonance of contrast between "leaves" and the vowel sound of "down," "brown," and "town," The vowel of "leaves" is made high in the front of the mouth and the diphthong of "town" ends high back in the mouth.

SUMMERS END

Lillian Moore

I see the summer birds fly south
Now that the days are cool.
Do they look down and see that I
Am on my way to school? (48:10)

There are several instances of assonance of similarity in this short poem. The vowel diphthong of "south," "now," and "down" ends on the same vowel sound as in "look." The vowel sound of "cool," "do," "to," and "school" is also high and back, but not identical with that of "look."

Assonance of contrast is found between all those high back vowels and the front vowels in "see," "days," and "way."

The child's concentration with self is expressed in this poem; he thinks in terms of himself even in the migration of birds. He has noticed them; do they notice him?

FIRST SNOW

Marie Louise Allen

Snow makes whiteness where it falls.
The bushes look like popcorn-balls.
The places where I always play,
Look like somewhere else today. (6:333)

As indicated earlier in the definitions section, this short poem is visual imagery and has the simile "bushes look like popcorn-balls." Each of the lines contains alliteration ("whiteness where," "bushes look like . . . balls," "places . . . play" and "look like") that adds to the musical effect of the poem.

The poem seems to be a comment on how things can change, so that even the very familiar can become strange. It does not say that this kind of change is either good or bad, simply that it is.

A PINE TREE STANDS SO LONELY

Heinrich Heine

A pine tree stands so lonely
  In the North where the high winds blow,
He sleeps; and the whitest blanket
  Wraps him in ice and snow.

He dreams--dreams of a palm tree
  That far in an Orient land,
Languishes, lonely and drooping,
  Upon the burning sand. (27:734)

This moving poem has been cited both in the discussion of the quality of assonance of contrast and in the comments on thermal imagery. It could also have been mentioned for euphony (as in "far in an Orient Land") and alliteration (as in "land," "languishes," and "lonely").

This poem is a comment on the nature of life. It says that neither extreme of any condition is a comfortable one. It shows that we can not know how it is in that far off place to which we would like to run. That place, that condition, are likely to be as lonely as the place where we are now.

WINTER

William Shakespeare

When icicles hang by the wall
  And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
  And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipt, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl
      Tuwhoo!
Tuwhit! tuwhoo! A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
  And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
  And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl--
Then nightly sings the staring owl
      Tuwhoo!
Tuwhit! tuwhoo! A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot. (50:16)

Many of the inconveniences of winter are indicated in this poem, some of which the children may not understand because of the rarely used words. "Saw" in "the parson's saw" does not mean that he is cutting wood, rather that he is tiresomely repeating something he has said many times before. "Keel," what "greasy Joan" is doing to the pot, means to prevent boiling over by skimming. "Keel the pot" means something like "skim the soup."

The children will respond to the rhythm and rhyme, to the sound made by the owl, and to most of the examples of winter discomfort. "Greasy Joan" will be thought amusing.

THE SNOW MAN

Mildred Plew Meigs

One day the snow man, Sir Benjamin Buzz,
He started to melt as a snow man does.

Down ran the crown of his icicled hat
Over his forehead and right after that

He noticed his whiskers go lolloping by
Along with his chin and his collar and tie.

Then Benjamin looked and saw that his chest
Was gliding away through his coat and his vest,

And after a little he sighed, "Ho! Hum!
There goes a finger and there goes a thumb!"

And scarce had he spoken when Benjamin felt
That both of his legs were beginning to melt;

Down they ran dribbling, bit after bit,
Like two creamy candles a sunbeam had lit.

"Alas," cried Sir Ben, "I am merely a bump!"
And the next thing he knew he sat down with a thump.

Then little by little he slipped like a sleigh,
And quietly, quietly slithered away:

And next when he noticed the spot he was on,
He looked for himself and he saw he was gone.

And that is the story of Benjamin Buzz,
Who melted one day as a snow man does. (66:73)

The theme of this poem seems to me to be the inevitability of flux and change. The tone is that of good-natured acceptance.

The rhyme is masculine in all instances except "on" with "gone," and then it is slant rhyme. The word "lolloping" is especially descriptive and imaginative. It suggests "galloping" while at the same time suggesting a more gradual and smoother movement with the beginning sound of "l."

There is a paradox in these lines: "And then he next noticed the spot he was on/He looked for himself and saw he was gone." If he were really gone, how could he see? Will we, too, be able to see when we are gone?

CHANSON INNOCENTE

E. E. Cummings

in Just
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old balloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing
from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's
spring
and
  the

    goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee (42:324)

This free verse poem was mentioned earlier in the discussion about levels of meaning based upon experience. It was suggested that children would respond to the imaginative use of language ("mud-luscious" and "puddle-wonderful") and the mention of games. For them, the balloonman will be like the balloon vendor at the county fair and carnival.

"The little lame balloonman" is really Pan, the part animal Greek god of fertility who plays upon a pipe. Whether the "balloon" that makes him a "balloonman" is part of the bag-pipe that he plays upon (which I doubt as his pipe was of reeds) or is the natural result of his influence on earthly creatures, I cannot decide. For me the ambiguity adds to meaning.

The poet has used several kinds of assonance. Adjacent identical vowel sounds occur in "mud-luscious," "puddle-wonderful," and "hop-scotch." Assonance of contrast is found in "far and wee" in which the vowel moves from low back to high front. Assonance of similarity is found in "eddieandbill" and "bettyandisbel" with all vowels being formed at the front of the mouth.

Spacing on the page is an important factor in this poem as it helps the reader interpret the phrasing and rhythm intended by the poet.

Time

SMALL SONG

Frances Frost

Morning is a little lass,
Her gay head yellow-curled,
Who jumps a rope of knotted flowers
Across the waking world.

Evening is a little boy
With dark wind-ruffled hair,
Who skips the stars like stones across
The darkling pond of air. (59:174)

Morning and evening are personified in this poem, giving us a new way to think about those regular occurrences.

The consonance of the letter "s" in "skips the stars like stones across" causes us to focus on that image.

MORNING

Emily Dickinson

Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were tall as they?
Has it feet like water lilies?
Has it feathers like a bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I've never heard?
Oh some scholar, oh some sailor,
Oh some wise man from the skies,
Please to tell a little pilgrim
Where the place called morning lies. (57:129)

The euphonious effects of all the repetitions of "m," "n," "r," and "l" was cited earlier in the definition of euphony.

The conversational effect of the questions directed at the reader serve to involve him in answering those questions. The answer, however, is as unknown to us as to the poet.

The unknown is related to the known in each of the questions, but in full realization, it seems, that "morning" is unlike any of the suggested comparisons.

The poet refers to herself as a pilgrim, a strange concept to relate to the near-recluse that we know she was. In a sense, though, she was a traveler, a wanderer, through life, as we all are. "Pilgrim" suggests the journey in "Pilgrim's Progress," and so in a word alludes to all the trials and temptations of life.

THERE ISN'T TIME

Eleanor Farjeon

There isn't time, there isn't time
To do the things I want to do,
With all the mountain-tops to climb,
And all the woods to wander through,
And all the seas to sail upon,
And everywhere there is to go,
And all the people, every one
Who lives upon the earth, to know.
There's only time, there's only time
To know a few, and do a few,
And then sit down and make a rhyme
About the rest I want to do. (59:160)

The limitations of time on the experiences of life seems to be the theme of this poem. The poet indicates that as a poet she has a way of coping with, if not overcoming, those limitations. As readers of poetry, perhaps our limitations are expanded too.

BEDTIME

Eleanor Farjeon

Five minutes, five minutes more, please!
  Let me stay five minutes more!
Can't I just finish the castle
  I'm building here on the floor?
Can't I just finish the story
  I'm reading here in my book?
Can't I just finish this bead-chain--
  It's <u>almost</u> is finished, look!
Can't I just finish this game, please?
  When a game's once begun
It's a pity never to find out
  Whether you've lost or won.
Can't I just stay five minutes?
  Well, can't I stay just four?
Three minutes, then? two minutes?
  Can't I stay <u>one</u> minute more? (6:92)

The humor in this poem comes from both the count-down nature of the child's repeated requests to stay up longer and the number and variety of activities in which he apparently is engaged.

Repetition of "Can't I just . . ." is climaxed by the appeal to reason: "It's a pity never to find out/Whether you've lost or won." When that fails, his requests are for progressively smaller amounts of time. At the end we realize with amusement that he has probably taken longer than that "one minute more" just making his plea.

Witches and Halloween

BLACK AND GOLD

Nancy Byrd Turner

Everything is black and gold,
  Black and gold, tonight:
Yellow pumpkins, yellow moon,
  Yellow candlelight;

Jet-black cat with golden eyes,
  Shadows black as ink,
Firelight blinking in the dark
  With a yellow blink.

Black and gold, black and gold,
  Nothing in between--
When the world turns black and gold,
  Then it's Halloween! (2:176)

The appeal here is to visual imagery, by repetition focusing thought on the colors "black and gold."

The consonance that is nearly bracket rhyme of "black" with "blink" and "blinking" adds to the musical effect of the poem. The euphony of "yellow" repeated in the series "yellow pumpkins, yellow moon, yellow candlelight" and again in "yellow blink" suggests the many shades of gold on this special night.

The connotative meanings of "jet black cat" add to the mood of this Halloween poem.

THE WITCH OF WILLOWBY WOOD

Rowena Bennett

There once was a witch of Willowby Wood,
and a weird wild witch was she, with hair that was snarled
and hands that were gnarled, and a kickety, rickety
knee. She could jump, they say,
to the moon and back, but this I never did see.
Now Willowby Wood was near Sassafras Swamp,
where there's never a road or rut. And there by the
singing witch-hazel bush the old woman builded
her hut. She builded with neither a hammer or shovel. She
kneaded, she rolled out, she baked
her brown hovel. For all witches' houses, I've oft heard
it said, are made of stick candy and fresh
gingerbread. But the shingles that shingled this old
witch's roof were lollopop shingles and hurricane-proof, too
hard to be pelted and melted by rain.
(Why this is important, I soon will explain.)
One day there came running to Sassafras Swamp a dark little
shadowy mouse. He was noted for being a scoundrel
and scamp. And he gnawed at the old woman's house where
the doorpost was weak and the doorpost was worn.
And when the witch scolded, he laughed her to scorn.
And when the witch chased him, he felt quite delighted. She
never could catch him for she was nearsighted. And so,
though she quibbled, he gnawed and he nibbled.
The witch said, "I won't have my house
take a tumble. I'll search in my magical book for a spell
I can weave and a charm I can mumble to get you
away from this nook. It will be a good warning to other
bad mice, who won't earn their bread
but go stealing a slice."
"Your charms cannot hurt," said the mouse, looking pert.
Well, she looked in her book and she
Waved her right arm, and she said the most magical
things. Till the mouse, feeling strange,
looked about in alarm, and found he was growing some

wings. He flapped and fluttered the longer she muttered.
"And now, my fine fellow,
you'd best be aloof," said the witch as he floundered
around. "You can't stay on earth and you
can't gnaw my roof. It's lollopop-hard and it's
hurricane-proof. So you'd better take off
from the ground. If you are wise, stay in the skies."
Then in went the woman of Willowby Wood,
in to her hearthstone and cat.
There she put her old volume up high on the shelf, and
fanned her hot face with her hat. Then she said,
"that is that! I have just made a BAT!" (59:228-229)

At first glance at this poem on the page it appears to be free verse, but to a degree it does not qualify. It has a strong rhythm, almost every kind of rhyme, and most elements of musical and figurative language.

Internal rhyme and alliteration are the two qualities that most catch the attention. The alliteration of "w" throughout the poem, as in "witch of Willowby Wood," adds to the smoothness and ease with which the poem is read. The many internal rhymes, such as "snarled" with "gnarled" and "kickety" with "rickety," add to the musical effect of the poem.

The character casting in this poem is unusual. The witch is a sympathetic character, an old lady who has a bad

knee and faulty eyesight. The mouse is the villain; he really does mean to eat her out of house and home. We share her relief that he is permanently disposed of by his transformation to a bat.

There may be a temptation to use this poem to teach that bats are mammals. Resist it! This understanding may come later, but do not exploit the pleasure of the many poetic qualities by using it for a science lesson.

THE EGG-SHELL

Rudyard Kipling

The wind took off with the sunset--
The fog came up with the tide,
When the Witch of the North took an Egg-shell
With a little Blue Devil inside.
"Sink," she said, "or swim," she said,
"It's all you will get from me.
And that is the finish of him!" she said,
And the Egg-shell went to sea.

The wind fell dead with the midnight--
The fog shut down like a sheet,
When the Witch of the North heard the Egg-shell
Feeling by hand for a fleet.
"Get!" she said, "or you're gone," she said,
But the little Blue Devil said "No!"
"The sights are just coming on," he said,
And he let the Whitehead go.

The wind got up with the morning--
The fog blew off with the rain,
When the Witch of the North saw the Egg-shell
And the little Blue Devil again.
"Did you swim?" she said. "Did you sink?" she said,
And the little Blue Devil replied:
"For myself I swam, but I <u>think</u>," he said,
"There's somebody sinking outside." (36:650)

This poem does not really make sense, but the rhythm and musical language catch one up so that it very nearly does.

There is an interesting pattern of repetition: the first line in each stanza describes the wind, the second line describes the fog, the third line tells some action of the "witch of the North," in regard to the "Egg-shell," and the fourth line, or soon thereafter, involves "the little Blue Devil."

The rhythm of the poem is saved from monotony by avoiding accented final syllables in lines one and three of each stanza.

Just Imagine

WISHES

Rose Fyleman

I wish I liked rice pudding,
I wish I were a twin,
I wish some day a real live fairy
Would just come walking in.

I wish when I'm at table
My feet would touch the floor,
I wish our pipes would burst next winter,
Just like they did next door.

I wish that I could whistle
Real proper grown-up tunes,
I wish they'd let me sweep the chimneys
On rainy afternoons.

I've got such heaps of wishes,
I've only said a few;
I wish that I could wake some morning
And find they'd all come true! (19:33)

It was suggested in the definitions section of this study that the first stanza of this poem has assonance of similarity; all vowels except that in "would" are made well forward in the mouth.

The accumulative effect of the poem is that even the wisher recognizes that there is little hope for the wishes to be fulfilled. This results in part from the repetition of "I wish" and partly from the nature of the wishes themselves: some possible, some unlikely, some too late to be accomplished, and some impossible.

IF

Anonymous

If all the world were apple-pie,
  And all the sea were ink,
And all the trees were bread and cheese;
  What should we have to drink? (57:213)

The conversational effect is achieved by use of a question asked of the reader or listener. The sheer nonsense, but also the consideration of an unlikely circumstance, will appeal to all children who have ever played "What if . . .?"

The use of the subjunctive may be learned incidentally or inductively in this poem, but certainly it should not be mentioned to the children.

Repetition of "all" in "all the world," "all the sea," and "all the trees" clues the listener by exaggeration to the impossibility of the situation imagined.

But, on the other hand, what would we drink?

THE TOASTER

William Jay Smith

A silver-scaled Dragon with jaws flaming red
Sits at my elbow and toasts my bread.
I hand him fat slices, and then, one by one,
He hands them back when he sees they are done.
(2:107)

The incongruous situation of the fierce dragon performing so domestic a task, efficiently and cooperatively, will appeal to the imagination of the first grade child. It is true that no first grader could share such an experience, but he would be willing, even eager, to imagine that he could. In a way the tame dragon appeals to the child's wish to triumph over the unknown.

Traditionally the dragon breathes fire. This one, however, does not seem quite so dangerous as the word is "flaming," modifying "red," rather than "flames" that are seen directly. This tame dragon's flames are well under control.

THE GOLD-TINTED DRAGON

Karla Kushkin

What's the good of a wagon
Without any dragon
To pull you for mile after mile?
An elegant lean one
A gold-tinted green one
Wearing a dragonly smile.
You'll sweep down the valleys
You'll sail up the hills
Your dragon will shine in the sun
And as you rush by
The people will cry
"I wish that my wagon had one!" (6:197)

The imaginative wishful thinking of a child is manifest in this light-hearted poem. The controlled use of cacophony and euphony contribute much to movement and meaning. The stops in "good" and "elegant" help to emphasize those words and to ready the reader for the lovely line "a gold-tinted green one," a seeming contradiction which adds to the appeal of the imaginary dragon. The euphony of "You'll sweep down the valleys/You'll sail up the hills/Your dragon will shine in the sun" emphasizes the ease and convenience such a creature would add to one's life.

The imaginative adjective "dragonly" to describe "smile" is particularly effective. It suggests the usual "heavenly smile" while emphasizing how un-heaven-like a dragon's smile would be.

ONE DAY WHEN WE WENT WALKING

Valine Hobbs

One day when we went walking,
  I found a dragon's tooth,
A dreadful dragon's tooth,
  "A locust thorn," said Ruth.

One day when we went walking,
  I found a brownie's shoe,
A brownie's button shoe,
  "A dry pea pod," said Sue.

One day when we went walking,
  I found a mermad's fan,
A merry mermaid's fan,
  "A scallop shell," said Dan.

One day when we went walking,
  I found a fairy's dress,
A fairy's flannel dress,
  "A mullein leaf," said Bess.

Next time I go walking--
  Unless I meet an elf,
A funny, friendly elf--
  I'm going by myself! (1:306)

The effects of imagination and lack of imagination are evident in this poem. The "I" of the poem sees the strange and unusual all around her, but her no-nonsense friends do not let her imagine long.

The poet has used alliteration and repetition to contribute to the spell of imagination. Whatever is thought to have been found is repeated in lines two and three, but in line three alliteration gives added emphasis: "dragon's tooth," and then "dreadful dragon's tooth." The walking partner debunks by introducing not only truth, but a new beginning consonant sound, thus emphasizing the contrast between the imagined and the true. It is not "a merry mermaid's fan," it is a "scallop shell."

POOR OLD LADY

Unknown

Poor old lady, she swallowed a fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.

Poor old lady, she swallowed a spider.
It squirmed and wriggled and turned inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.

Poor old lady, she swallowed a bird.
How absurd! She swallowed a bird.
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.

Poor old lady, she swallowed a cat.
Think of that! She swallowed a cat.
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird.
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.

Poor old lady, she swallowed a dog.
She went the whole hog when she swallowed the dog.
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.

Poor old lady, she swallowed a cow.
I don't know how she swallowed the cow.
She swallowed the cow to catch the dog,
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.
Poor old lady, I think she'll die.

Poor old lady, she swallowed a horse.
She died, of course. (6:251-252)

Repetition here is accumulative with each new addition to the old lady's bill of fare building to the climax of swallowing the horse. The change of rhythm in the last line, when the mock fear of her death is realized, adds to the dramatic effect of the poem. Of course, it is not to be taken seriously, what old lady could swallow all that?

The poet has used repetition of words, phrases, and whole lines to achieve the chant-like effect of the poem. The internal rhyme of "why" with "fly," "absurd" with "bird," "that" with "cat," and "how" with "cow" adds to the music and rhythm of the poem.

This poem tells us that there are limits to what we can do, even when we approach them gradually. The "poor old lady" found out the hard way.

LIMERICKS

Edward Lear

There was an old person in gray
Whose feelings were tinged with dismay;
She purchased two parrots, and fed them with carrots
Which pleased that old person in gray. (38:1)

There was an old lady of France,
Who taught little ducklings to dance;
When she said, "Tick-a-tack!" they only said "Quack!"
Which grieved that old lady of France. (38:28)

There was an old person of Ware,
Who rode on the back of a bear;
When they asked, "Does it trot?" he said, "Certainly not!"
He's a Moppsikon Floppsikon bear!" (38:17)

Limericks are identified by their unique rhythm and rhyme scheme. The line division is often five lines instead of four, making two shorter rhyming lines out of the one long line that now has internal rhyme. The first two and the last lines rhyme.

The limerick is used to convey humor or nonsense.

Most of Lear's limericks are more appreciated by older children or need to be reinforced with illustrations for first graders. These three seem appropriate listening material for the first grade pupil.

The triple rhymed "Moppsikon Floppsikon" is both imaginative and descriptive.

WONDER WHERE THIS HORSESHOE WENT

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Wonder where this horseshoe went.
Up and down, up and down,
Up and past the monument,
Maybe into town.

Wait a minute. "Horseshoe,
How far have you been?"
Says it's been to Salem
And halfway to Lynn.

Wonder who was in the team.
Wonder what they saw.
Wonder if they passed a bridge--
Bridge with a draw.

Says it went from one bridge
Straight upon another.
Says it took a little girl
Driving with her mother. (2:88)

The child's wondering about all the world out beyond what he has seen is well expressed in this poem. The author has adopted the casual speech patterns of a child by omitting the pronouns "I" and "it" at the beginning of many lines. The technique of speaking directly to the horseshoe is also something that a child would be likely to do.

Even the facts supposedly related by the horseshoe are just the sort a child would imagine--directly from one bridge to another seems an impossible dream, but relationship to oneself bring it all back to reality when it is learned that a girl and her mother took that exciting ride.

"From one bridge/Straight upon another" may seem imaginary, but it is reality for those who have driven to the Florida Keys. My private image of this last stanza is one of the horse-drawn buggy carrying the mother and child moving down this bridge that goes to sea right over the horizon.

TRAVEL

Edna St. Vincent Millay

The railroad track is miles away,
  And the day is loud with voices speaking,
Yet there isn't a train goes by all day
  But I hear its whistle shrieking.

All night there isn't a train goes by,
  Though the night is still for sleep and dreaming
But I see its cinders red on the sky,
  And hear its engine steaming.

My heart is warm with the friends I make,
  And better friends I'll not be knowing,
Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take,
  No matter where it's going. (2:81)

This poem restates that urge to explore, to travel, to experience. The sound of the train is the call to go.

The dual meaning of "still" in the line "Though the night is still for sleep and dreaming" gives increased meaning to the sound in the night. The night is at once both "still" in the sense of being quiet and "still" in the sense of being yet the time to sleep, the dark of night.

TRAINS

James S. Tippett

Over the mountains,
Over the plains,
Over the rivers,
Here come the trains.

Carrying passengers,
Carrying mail
Bringing their precious loads
In without fail

Thousands of freight cars
All rushing on
Through day and darkness,
Through dusk and dawn.

Over the mountains,
Over the plains,
Over the rivers,
Here come the trains. (2:80)

Repetition here has the effect of building the sound of a train and at the same time indicating the where, the what, and the when about trains.

Repetition of the first stanza as a final stanza unites the poem and emphasizes the rhythm. The alliteration of "day," "darkness," "dusk," and "dawn" emphasizes those words, helping the reader or listener to realize that the work of the trains is continuous.

THE FREIGHT TRAIN

Rowena Bennett

The slow freight wriggles along the rail
With a red caboose for a lashing tail,
With a one-eyed engine for a head
The slow freight follows the river bed.

He moves like a snake that has grown too fat,
One that has swallowed a frog and a rat;
But a giant of snakes is the moving freight
And these are some of the things he ate:

A herd of sheep and a hundred hens
And dozens of pigs with crates for pens
And horses and cows by the sixes and tens;
And these are some of the things he drank:
Oil and gasoline by the tank,
Milk by the gallon and cream by the pail--
No wonder he moves at the pace of a snail. (59: 178-179)

The figurative language in this poem is both simile and metaphor, first saying that the train is "like a snake" and then that it "is" a "giant snake" with a prodigious appetite.

There are some elements of musical language. There is consonance in "herd. . .hundred hens" with the repetitions of "h," "r," and "d." "Gallon" and "gasoline" are also consonance with the repetitions of "g," "l" and "n." There is alliteration of "frogs" with "freight" and of "crates" with "cream." The rhyme is all single syllable. The listing of the intake of the freight train is given euphony by the repeated use of the word "and."

This poem may have no deeper meaning for the teacher than it does for the student, but for both of them it supplies a new way of thinking about trains.

A MODERN DRAGON

Rowena Bennett

A train is a dragon that roars through the dark.
He wriggles his tail as he sends up a spark.
He pierces the night with his one yellow eye,
And all the earth trembles when he rushes by.
(7:146)

What a frightening spectacle this modern dragon is, causing all to tremble at his passing! The pleasure of this poem lies both in the metaphor of the train as a dragon and in the deliberate double meaning of the word "tremble." The earth does tremble, if not in fear, because of the vibrations set up by the passing train.

On second thought, the dragon is not so fearsome after all. He does not "lash," "crack," or "snap" his tail; he only "wriggles" it. He does not breath flames, only "a spark."

Does he know why we tremble? The mock serious tone suggests he does, but continues to pretend to be a dragon anyway.

Perhaps the poem is saying that dragons are not what they used to be.

NOTICE

David McCord

I have a dog,
I had a cat.
I've got a frog
Inside my hat. (6:72)

What happens when he takes off his hat? Where will he be when he does it? Certainly this is an example of a poem that leaves to the listener or reader the climax of the action.

The assonance of "have," "had," "cat," and "hat" and of "I" with "inside" adds to the impact of this poem. There is also alliteration in "have," "had," and "hat."

The surprise element and the visual image of a boy with a frog in his hat will be as funny to the first graders as it is to their teacher.

JUMP OR JINGLE

Evelyn Beyer

Frogs jump
Caterpillars hump

Worms wiggle
Bugs jiggle

Rabbits hop
Horses clop

Snakes slide
Seagulls glide

Mice creep
Deer leap

Puppies bounce
Kittens pounce

Lions stalk--
But--
I walk! (6:85-86)

The contrasts of the many kinds of locomotion are evident in these unlike pairs. The extra line "But" adds emphasis by the change of rhythm to the final line "I walk," thus demonstrating that people are not only different, they are special.

We cannot be sure if the "but" is one of pride or of disappointment. If of pride, it indicates that walking is a superior way of getting about; if of disappointment, it shows regret for all the unexperienced interesting ways that other creatures move.

I would like to glide.

THE ANSWERS

Robert Clairmont

"When did the world begin and how?"
I asked a lamb, a goat, a cow:
"What's it all about and why?"
I asked a hog as he went by:

"Where will the whole thing end and when?"
I asked a duck, a goose, a hen:

And I copied all the answers too,
A quack, a honk, an oink, a moo. (6:227)

To me this poem demonstrates the futility of asking fellow creatures about the meaning of life, for, after all, what can they say but what they can say. There are natural limits to the kind of answers we can give, based upon the kind of creatures we are. The answer may have meaning to the answerer, but there will be as many answers as answerers.

Assonance of pattern is found in two lines of this poem: "I asked a lamb, a goat, a cow" and "A quack, a honk, an oink, a moo." In both cases the vowels are made beginning low front and progressing to the high back. This is also a descending order of frequency, as the chart in the definitions section indicates.

A BIG TURTLE

Unknown

A big turtle sat on the end of a log,
Watching a tadpole turn into a frog.
(6:79)

To a child this short poem may simply be the description of a scene, but to an adult it could be a twentieth century comment of the nature of time and the flux and change of life. A child might be reminded by this patient inactive turtle of another turtle-like creature, the tortoise of the race, who also prevailed.

A relationship between the turtle and the tadpole is accomplished with consonance, both begin with "t" and end with the sound of "l." They are not in bracket rhyme because more than the accented vowel is different. The masculine rhyme of "log" with "frog" has been noted in the definitions section of this study.

THE LITTLE TURTLE

Vachel Lindsay

There was a little turtle.
He lived in a box.
He swam in a puddle.
He climbed on the rocks.

He snapped at a mosquito.
He snapped at a flea.
He snapped at a minnow.
And he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito.
He caught the flea.
He caught the minnow.
But he didn't catch me. (7:79)

This perennial primary poem demonstrates techniques. Repetition is certainly the most obvious, first in the sequence "he lived," "he swam," "he climbed," and then in the four uses of the "he snapped" and the three of "he caught." Of the four lines in each stanza there is just one rhyming pair, serving to avoid the monotony of a too regular

pattern. "Mosquito" and "minnow," end words in the lines of two stanzas, begin with alliteration and end with assonance, but they are not in slant rhyme because the identical vowels are not the accented ones.

The change of the pattern of action is emphasized by the change from "caught" to "didn't catch." The satisfaction in escaping is evident.

The staccato effect of the short sentences adds to the action and meaning of the poem.

CHANTICLEER

John Farrar

High and proud on the barnyard fence
Walks rooster in the morning.
He shakes his comb, he shakes his tail
And gives his daily warning.

"Get up, you lazy boys and girls.
It's time you should be dressing!"
I wonder if he keeps a clock,
Of if he's only guessing. (6:50)

The "wonder" in this poem appeals to the desire in us all to know the what, the how, and the why of things. How can the rooster be so sure? There is humor in the thought of a rooster with a clock, but perhaps he does have an inward time-piece that not only arouses him but motivates him to proclaim to the world that a new day has come.

The word "warning" troubled me. What does the rooster know about the new day that would cause him to issue a warning? Finally I realized that the danger is not in the new day, but in us. The danger is that we may sleep through it, we may miss it, we may waste it.

MRS. PECK-PIGEON

Eleanor Farjeon

Mrs. Peck-Pigeon
Is picking for bread,
Bob--bob--bob
Goes her little round head.
Tame as a pussy cat
In the street,
Step--step--step
Go her little red feet.
With her little red feet
And her little round head,
Mrs. Peck-Pigeon
Goes picking for bread. (6:62-63)

This is visual imagery; we can see the pigeon walking and eating. The title "Mrs. Peck-Pigeon" at first suggests personification, but instead it comes to indicate the mature and purposeful way she goes about her business.

There is alliteration in "Peck-Pigeon," "picking," and "pussy." The cacophony in the consonant repetitions of "Bob--bob--bob" and "Step--step--step" help us be aware of the movement of the pigeon.

A BIRD

Emily Dickinson

A bird came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass. (2:53)

The taste imagery of this poem was indicated earlier in the study. Raw angle worms, by halves or whole, are affective but not appealing. The effect of the second stanza is more that of visual imagery, causing us to see the bird in our imaginations.

The cacophonous effects of "drank a dew," "convenient grass," "hopped," and "let a beetle pass" slow down the movement of the poem and suggest the deliberate fashion in which the bird acted.

The use of the word "fellow" in referring to the worm, rather than creature or thing, suggests the poet felt some sympathy or bond of kinship with it. Is it that she regrets the almost un-noticed passing of a life? Or is she saying that we, like the bird, survive because something else does not, and then go on about our business unconcerned?

THE EAGLE

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls. (70:345)

This poem was cited earlier in the definitions section of this study as an example of cacophony.

The adjective and noun combinations are especially effective. "Crooked hands," "azure world," and "wrinkled sea" evoke visual images that "horny claws," "clear blue sky," and "stormy sea" could not.

The simile comparing the dive of the eagle to a thunderbolt suggests both speed and power.

CATS

Marchette Chute

A baby cat is soft and sweet.
It tangles in around your feet.

But when a cat if fully grown,
It often likes to be alone. (6:31)

This poem is a comment about the changing nature of life: things just do not stay the same. What is desired and sought at one stage is avoided at another.

Assonance of contrast helps point up this change. The "e" of "sweet" and "feet" is high front, while the "o" of "grown" and "alone" is mid back.

"Soft" and "sweet" have consonance in the repetition of the same beginning and ending consonant sounds.

The word "tangles" is an especially appropriate choice as it describes so aptly the touch imagery of an encounter with a kitten.

THE PURPLE COW

Gelett Burgess

I never saw a Purple Cow,
  I never hope to see one;
But I can tell you, anyhow,
  I'd rather see than be one. (2:117)

The predictable regularity of the rhythm and rhyme of this poem brought it near to being rejected for this anthology, but it is included because of what I perceive to be a symbol--the "Purple Cow."

The "Purple Cow" is a symbol for all the things that we have never seen but have been told exist: the starving multitudes of India, the crowded refugees in Hong Kong, the poor of Appalachia, or the racial minority of a metropolitan ghetto. All these things we know are possible, are true, and deep in our hearts we are glad we are not there and part of it.

So it is with the "Purple Cow." We have not seen one, and we honestly do not want to see one. But, if we must, we would "rather see than be one."

FLIES

Dorothy Aldis

Flies walk on ceilings
And straight up the walls
Not even the littlest
Fly ever falls.

And I am quite certain
If I were a fly
I'd leave my home and go
Walk on the sky. (7:99)

The slant rhyme of "go" with the single syllable rhyming pair "fly" and "sky" has already been noted in the definitions section of this study.

The use of the subjunctive in "if I were a fly" indicates that the impossibility is recognized. The poet aspires to do more as a fly than the real flies do--they are content with ceilings, but she would try for the sky.

The author speaks directly to the listener or reader, as if she assumed that everyone shared her interest in trying something new and daring.

On another level of interpretation, this kind of wishful thinking may indicate both a reluctance to stay at home and a recognition that one does not have the special abilities to do those new and daring things. It seems to say: "If I were something other than what I am, I could really do something spectacular. But I am what I am, so here I stay."

THE ELEPHANT

A. E. Houseman

A tail behind, a trunk in front,
Complete the usual elephant.
The tail in front, the trunk behind,
Is what you very seldom find.

If you for specimens should hunt
With trunks behind and tails in front,
The hunt would occupy you long,
The force of habit is so strong. (20:329)

The theme of this poem seems to be the natural order of things. The mock serious tone is clued by the imperfect rhyme of "front" with "elephant" (the accent is on different vowels,) the cacophony of the key words, and the repetition and regrouping of "tail" and "trunk" with "front" and "behind."

This poem does not say it would be impossible to find such a variation, rather that it would be a long search. Things, including elephants, tend to follow the original pattern.

AN INCONVENIENCE

John Banister Tabb

To his cousin the Bat
Squeaked the envious Rat,
"How fine to be able to fly!"
Tittered she, "Leather wings
Are convenient things;
But nothing to sit on have I." (7:155)

The humorous predicament of the bat will appeal to children.

The danger in this poem is in the temptation to use it to teach that bats are mammals. If the child has encountered this fact in science, he will understand this aspect of the poem by himself. If he has not, do not use this poem as a science lesson.

The regularity of the rhythm and rhyme serve to reinforce the humor in this poem.

The verbs "squeaked" and "tittered" are especially effective, the quality of the consonants and the high front vowels suggesting the tone of voice of the creatures.

FUZZY WUZZY

Lillian Schulz Vanada

Fuzzy wuzzy, creepy crawly
Caterpillar funny,
You will be a butterfly
When the days are sunny.

Winging, flinging, dancing, springing
Butterfly so yellow.
You were once a caterpillar,
Wriggly, wiggly fellow. (2:61)

This poem is about the changing nature of things: today's caterpillar is tomorrow's butterfly.

There are several instances of internal rhyme: "fuzzy wuzzy," "winging, flinging, . . . springing," and "wriggly, wiggly." "Dancing" is in slant rhyme with the series that includes "springing." All forms of rhyme contribute to the musical effect of the poem.

The alliteration of "creepy crawly" suggests the current unpleasantness of the caterpillar stage.

ONLY MY OPINION

Monica Shannon

Is a caterpillar ticklish?
  Well, it's always my belief
That he giggles, as he wiggles
  Across a hairy leaf. (31:457)

This little bit of nonsense feels good on the tongue. The combining of cacophonous stops with euphonious laterals develops a near pattern in "caterpillar ticklish" and does rhyme in "giggles" and "wiggles."

The conversational tone, asking a direct question of the listener or reader, serves to involve him in the theorizing of the poem.

I HELD A LAMB

Kim Worthington

One day when I went visiting,
A little lamb was there,
I picked it up and held it tight,
It didn't seem to care.

Its wool was soft and felt so warm--
Like sunlight on the sand,
And when I gently put it down
It licked me on the hand. (6:49)

The imagery of this poem appeals to the sense of touch; it suggests the softness and warmth of the lamb and the touch of its tongue on the hand.

There is alliteration in "little lamb," "wool . . . warm," and "sunlight . . . sand." Although they are separated in the poem, the rhyme of "picked" and "licked" adds to the harmony of the poem.

ON THE GRASSY BANKS

Christina G. Rossetti

On the grassy banks
Lambkins at their pranks;
Woolly sisters, woolly brothers,
     Jumping off their feet,
While their woolly mothers
     Watch by them and bleat. (7:59)

The visual image of ewes and their lambs is well described in this short poem. The affection of the poet is revealed in the term "lambkin" whose suffix "-kin" suggests both small size (hence, needing care) and kinship.

Repetition of "woolly" emphasizes the family unity, the family resemblance.

Two words on first reading seem to be the wrong words. The first is "off" in the phrase "jumping off their feet." After some thought, one realizes that "off" is singularly

appropriate, indicating the zest and energy with which the lambs are frolicing about. The second is the final word of the poem, "bleat." "The grassy banks" had caused me to anticipate that final word as "eat." This too requires some thought to understand. For the ewe, to bleat is to communicate with the lamb, to perform her motherly duties of care and training. So, perhaps the kinship we have with the lamb is this learning from our mothers.

THE OCTOPUS

Ogden Nash

Tell me, O Octopus, I begs,
Is those things arms, or is they legs?
I marvel at thee, Octopus;
If I were thou, I'd call me Us. (2:119)

The faulty number agreement of subject and verb and the mock serious formality of "thee" and "thou" are clues to, and contributions to, the humor of this poem. The idea of calling a single being "us" will be appreciated even by those who might say "arms is" and "legs is."

MICE

Rose Fyleman

I think mice
Are rather nice.

Their tails are long,
Their faces small,
They haven't any
Chins at all.
Their ears are pink,
Their teeth are white,
They run about
The house at night.
They nibble things
They shouldn't touch
And no one seems
To like them much.

But I think mice
Are nice. (2:55)

The assonance resulting from the repetition of "i" in the first two and last two lines has been discussed in the definitions section of this study.

The center section of the poem lists the various things that mice do, but indicates no really redeeming of appealing characteristics. The extra emphasis given "I" in the line "But I think mice" is further reinforced by the short last line "Are nice." The mice then, are liked not because of how they look or what they do; they are simply liked. Do we really need a reason?

THE HOUSE OF THE MOUSE

Lucy Sprague Mitchell

The house of the mouse
is a wee little house,
a green little house in the grass,
which big clumsy folk
may hunt and may poke
and still never see as they pass
this sweet little, neat little,
wee little, green little,
cuddle-down hide-away
house in the grass. (6:56)

Assonance is the most outstanding characteristic of this poem. It could be called assonance of pattern because it is repeated or it could be identified as assonance of similarity because it is the use of adjacent high front vowel sounds. The pattern and similarity is found in "wee little," "green little," "sweet little," "neat little," "wee little," and "green little." (The last two are repetions, as they are in the poem.)

The cacophony of "big clumsy folk" serves to emphasize both size and awkwardness.

HOLDING HANDS

Lenore M. Link

Elephants walking
Along the trails

Are holding hands
By holding tails.

Trunks and tails
Are handy things

When elephants walk
In circus rings.

Elephants work
And elephants play

And Elephants walk
And feel so gay.

And when they walk
It never fails

They're holding hands
By holding tails. (2:74)

This poem supplies a new way of thinking about the comparison of elephants to people by suggesting that "holding tails" is to elephants what "holding hands" is to people.

The appeal here is to visual imagery. We see the elephants, we do not smell, hear, or feel them.

The short line length and the several repetitions cause the poem to move quickly and easily.

THE WHITE SEAL

Rudyard Kipling

You musn't swim till you're six weeks old,
  Or your head will be sunk by your heels;
And summer gales and Killer Whales
  Are bad for baby seals.
Are bad for baby seals, dear rat,
  As bad as bad can be.
But splash and grow strong,
And you can't be wrong,
  Child of the Open Sea! (36:648)

This homely advice to a baby seal uses several devices for poetic effect. The reader is addressed directly, as if he were that seal. The regularity of the masculine rhyme ("heels" with "seals," "be" with "sea," "strong" with "wrong," and "gales" with "whales.") accents the words "old" and "rat" for which there is no rhyme. "Rat" is in assonance with the line that follows it: "As bad as bad can be." "Old" is in slant rhyme with "child" and in assonance with "open," thus unifying the first and last lines.

There is assonance in the repetition of the vowel sound of "heels," "seals," "be," and "sea." Both the letters "s" and "b" are repeated enough times to be identified as consonance: "swim," "six," "sunk," "summer," and the many repetitions of "bad" and "baby."

PUPPY

Aileen Fisher

My puppy likes
a hard old bone
as if it were
an ice-cream cone. (6:36)

The imagery of this poem affects the sense of taste. The cacophony of "hard old bone" makes it seem even less appetizing in comparison to the connotative meanings of "ice-cream cone."

The capitalization and lack of punctuation encourage the reading in a conversational, prose-like tone, but the distillation of thought and the built-in rhythm identify it as a poem.

This poem demonstrates the use of the subjunctive ("as if it were") that is sometimes thought of as contrary to fact. Usage of higher levels of spoken and written English should of course be encouraged, but it is not suggested that this usage be brought to the attention of the child.

SUNNING

James S. Tippett

Old Dog lay in the summer sun
Much too lazy to rise and run.
He flapped an ear
At a buzzing fly.
He winked a half oped
Sleepy eye.
He scratched himself
On an itching spot,
As he dozed on the porch
Where the sun was hot.
He whimpered a bit
From force of habit
While he lazily dreamed
Of chasing a rabbit.
But Old Dog happily lay in the sun
Much too lazy to rise and run. (2:47)

Even with the use of many verbs, the movement of the poem is slow and leisurely. "Lay," "flapped," "winked," "scratched," "dozed," "whimpered," "dreamed," and, again, "lay" all tell of some small action of the dog. The visual image of the old dog sunning himself is given a twitching kind of movement by those verbs and also by the short line length.

There is rhyme of many of the lines, but not of all of them. There is alliteration in "summer sun," "rise and run," and "from force."

Repetition of the second line, "Much too lazy to rise and run," as the final line convinces us of just how comfortably lazy "Old Dog" is lying there "in the sun."

SNAKE

Emily Dickinson

A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him,--did you not?
His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,
A spotted shaft is seen;
And then it closes at your feet
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,
A floor too cool for corn.
Yet when a child, and barefoot,
I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought a whip-lash
Unbraiding in the sun,--
When, stooping to secure it,
It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people
I know, and they know me;
I feel for them a transport
Of cordiality;

But never met this fellow,
Attended or alone,
Without a tighter breathing,
And zero at the bone. (70:467)

This poem has been cited earlier as an example of slant rhyme and of assonance of pattern. It might also have been used to illustrate kinesthetic imagery ("without a tighter breathing") and thermal imagery ("zero at the bone"). The connotative meanings each individual has for "snake" will affect the degree to which one responds to the imagery of the poem.

This poem would probably be most enjoyed by the first graders late in the school year after they have had many listening experiences with poetry and have well developed listening skills.

People

PRESENTS

Marchette Chute

I wanted a rifle for Christmas,
I wanted a bat and a ball,
I wanted some skates and a bicycle,
But I didn't want mittens at all.

I wanted a whistle
And I wanted a kite,
I wanted a pocketknife
That shut up tight.
I wanted some boots
And I wanted a kit,
But I didn't want mittens one little bit!

I told them I didn't like mittens,
I told them as plain as plain.
I told them I didn't WANT mittens,
And they've given me mittens again! (1:306)

The repetition of the phrases "I wanted" and "I told them" was discussed in the definitions section of this study.

The shorter line length in the second stanza and the euphony resulting from the repetition of "want" and "and"

cause that section to move smoothly and quickly. The longer last line, "But I didn't want mittens one little bit," emphasizes its meaning by its length.

Even though "plain" and "again" are no longer a perfect rhyme, they are still in slant rhyme with each other. The slant rhyme seems to give added meaning to "again"; this sort of disappointment has happened before.

MUD

Polly Chase Boyden

Mud is very nice to feel
  All squishy-squash between the toes!
I'd rather wade in wiggly mud
  Than smell a yellow rose.

Nobody else but the rosebush knows
How nice mud feels
  Between the toes. (31:298)

The imagery in this poem appeals to our sense of touch--for who has not known the delight of walking barefoot in the mud?

To a degree, the poem personifies the rosebush by indicating that it and the voice of the poem share a special knowledge. Because the rose knows about mud and toes, it will not feel rejected by being second choice.

"Squishy-squash" is nearly bracket rhyme.

GALOSHES

Rhoda W. Bacmeister

Susie's galoshes
Make splishes and sploshes
And slooshes and sloshes,
As Susie steps slowly
Along in the slush.

They stamp and they tramp
On the ice and concrete,
They get stuck in the muck and the mud;
But Susie likes much best to hear

The slippery slush
As it slooshes and sloshes,
And splishes and sploshes,
All round her galoshes! (2:157)

This delightful poem has many characteristics that have already been used as examples in the definitions section of this study. The feminine rhyme of "galoshes" with "sploshes," the bracket rhyme of "splishes" with "sploshes," and the imagery that affects the sense of hearing have already been discussed.

The poem makes us hear Susie as she sloshes along. The cacophony of the consonants in the second stanza ("p" and "t" in "stamp" and "tramp," the sound of "k" in "concrete" and "stuck," and the "d" in "mud") slows down the reader and has a less soothing sound to the mind's ear than all the repetitions of "sl," "spl," and "sh." In the first stanza the word "step" with the forced pauses caused by the "t" and the "p" help us to know just how carefully Susie moves along.

TIRED TIM

Walter de la Mare

Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him.
He lags the long bright morning through,
Ever so tired of nothing to do;
He moons and mopes the livelong day,
Nothing to think about, nothing to say;
Up to bed with his candle to creep,
Too tired to yawn, too tired to sleep:
Poor tired Time! It's sad for him. (2:6)

The tone of this poem is irony as it pretends to sympathy for Tim, but shows that he really has nothing to be all that tired about.

The repetition of the first and last lines was discussed earlier in the definitions section, indicating that even though the words say the same thing, they do not mean the same thing. At the end of the poem we are "wise" to Tim.

PEOPLE

Lois Lenski

Tall people, short people,
Thin people, fat,
Lady so dainty
Wearing a hat,
Straight people, dumpy people,
Man dressed in brown;
Baby in a buggy--
These make a town. (6:130)

This short poem emphasizes the variety of kinds of people that "make a town." The consonance of "t" in "tall," "short," "fat," "dainty," "hat," "straight," and "town" together with the "b" of "brown," "baby," and "buggy," and the "p" in the five repetitions of "people" develop cacophony, causing the reader to read more slowly and precisely. This precision serves to accentuate the variety.

HAPPINESS

A. A. Milne

John had
Great Big
Waterproof
Boots on;
John had a
Great Big
Waterproof
Hat;
John had a
Great Big
Waterproof
Mackintosh--
And that
(Said John)
Is
That. (2:105)

The short line length and the capitalization of "Big" within the line are clues to the emphasis given nearly every word in this short poem.

The three repetitions of "John had/Great Big/Waterproof" automatically develops an assonance of pattern. The cacophony of the consonants in those words causes the words to be said more slowly and deliberately, thus demonstrating John's determination and delight. It must take some determination to move about in all the "Great Big" clothes, and the title "Happiness" tells us how John feels about it all.

THE END

A. A. Milne

When I was One,
I had just begun.

When I was Two,
I was nearly new.

When I was Three,
I was hardly me.

When I was Four,
I was not much more.

When I was Five,
I was just alive.

But now I am Six, I'm as clever as clever.
So I think I'll be six now for ever and ever.
(45:56)

The progression through the years to the ultimate "clever" age of six reminds us that we sometimes forget that we cannot stay what we are "for ever and ever." This comment on the nature of life, of its inevitable change, seems to me to be the theme of this poem.

The longer line length helps to reveal the satisfaction and determination of being six.

MISS T.

Walter De La Mare

It's a very odd thing--
  As odd as can be--
That whatever Miss T. eats
  Turns into Miss T.;
Porridge and apples,
  Mince, muffins and mutton,
Jam, junket, jumbles--
  Not a rap, not a button
It matters; the moment
  They're out of her plate,
Though shared by Miss Butcher
  And sour Mr. Bate;
Tiny and cheerful,
  And neat as can be,
Whatever Miss T. eats
  Turns into Miss T. (66:23)

In this poem the poet has used the cacophonous and euphonious characteristics of consonants to affect the ease and movement of the lines. The phrase "whatever Miss T. eats" suggests by the care with which it must be said the care with which she eats. "Porridge and apples" and "jam, junket, and jumbles" require more effort than "mince, muffins, and mutton." Repetition of "whatever Miss T. eats/ Turns into Miss T." emphasizes the effect of those lines.

One might really stretch for meaning, message hunt, some call it, and suggest that the theme of this poem is that we are all the sum total of our experiences, even though those same experiences might have affected others differently. (Mr. Bates is "sour" but Miss T. is "cheerful.") Such stretching is likely to take the fun out of the sound of the poem and the visual image of a fastidious and cheerful child. I do not recommend it.

CHOOSING SHOES

ffRida Wolfe

New shoes, new shoes,
  Red and pink and blue shoes.
Tell me, what would you choose,
  If they'd let us buy?

Buckle shoes, bow shoes,
  Pretty, pointy-toe shoes,
Strappy, cappy low shoes,
  Let's have some to try.

Bright shoes, white shoes,
  Dandy-dance-by-night shoes,
Perhaps-a-little tight shoes,
  Like some? So would I.

But

Flat shoes, fat shoes,
  Stump-along-like-that-shoes,
Wipe-them-on-the-mat shoes,
  That's the sort they'll buy. (1:306)

It could be said that "shoes" are the symbol of what we get from life. We may want the fancy, pretty, frivolous things, but for most of us circumstances require that we settle for the practical ones. Early experience with that reality often occurs for children in a shoe store.

The consonants that are stops slow the reading of the second line: "Red and pink and blue shoes." Alliteration and internal rhyme in the other lines describing the exciting kind of shoes increases the musical quality of the poem and, in a way, emphasizes the dreaming wishful thinking that is taking place.

The connotative meanings of "fat" and "flat" indicate the undesirability of "the sort they'll buy."

THE COBBLER

Eleanor Alletta Chaffee

Crooked heels
  And scuffy toes
Are all the kinds
  Of shoes he knows.

He patches up
  The broken places
Sews the seams
  And shines their faces. (2:13)

The vowel sounds in this poem make it fun to say and fun to hear. Certainly there is assonance of contrast in the sound of "crooked heels," "shoes he knows," and "sews the seams." There are high or mid back vowels combined with high front vowels in each of those phrases.

Cacophony contributes to meaning. When the cobbler gets the shoes they are "crooked" and "scuffy" and he has to "patch up/The broken places. The consonance in the repetition of "s" in "sews," "seams," "shines," and "faces" is effective in communicating the transformation.

To some degree the shoes are personified by having "faces," but this is not consistent throughout the poem.

GREGORY GRIGGS

Laura E. Richards

Gregory Griggs, Gregory Griggs,
Had forty-seven different wigs;
He wore them up, and he wore them down,
To please the people of Boston town.
He wore them east, and he wore them west,
But he never could tell which he liked the best.
(6:244)

The cacophonous consonance of "Gregory Griggs, Gregory Griggs" makes the line fun to say. That a male, either boy or man, should have and wear that large number of wigs presents a humorous visual image.

The four repetitions of "he wore" help to emphasize both time and space; he evidently wore them always, everywhere.

One wonders if "pleased" was the effect he had on the proper Bostonians.

GODFREY GORDON GUSTAVUS GORE

William Brighty Rands

Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore--
No doubt you have heard the name before--
Was a boy who never would shut a door!

The wind might whistle, the wind might roar,
And teeth be aching and throats be sore,
But still he never would shut the door.

His father would beg, his mother implore,
"Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore,
We really do wish you would shut the door!"

Their hands they wrung, their hair they tore;
But Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore
Was deaf as the buoy out at the Nore.

When he walked forth the folks would roar,
"Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore,
Why don't you think to shut the door?"

They rigged out a Shutter with sail and oar,
And threatened to pack off Gustavus Gore
On a voyage of penance to Singapore.

But he begged for mercy, and said, "No more!
Pray do not send me to Singapore
On a Shutter, and then I will shut the door!"

"You will?" said his parents; "then keep on shore!
But mind you do! For the plague is sore
Of a fellow that never will shut the door,
Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore!" (2:129)

"Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore" is both alliteration and cacophony; by sheer quantity it sets the pace of exaggeration for the poem. The regularity of the rhythm and rhyme helps sustain interest through this slightly longer than usual (for this anthology) poem.

Failing to close a door is certainly an experience the children have shared. Fearfully exaggerated threats might also have been shared. This poem may help them better understand the situation.

For an adult "Singapore" may have connotations that are exotic and mysterious, but for a child "Singapore" is only the anticipated rhyme in the regular pattern.

WHERE'S MARY?

Ivy O. Eastwick

Is Mary in the dairy?
Is Mary on the stair?
What? Mary's in the garden?
What is she doing there?
Has she made the butter yet?
Has she made the beds?
Has she topped the gooseberries
And taken off their heads?
Has she done the grate?
Are the new green peas all shelled?
It is getting late!
What? She hasn't done a thing?
Here's a nice to-do!
Mary has a dozen jobs
And hasn't finished two.
Well! here IS a nice to-do!
Well! upon my word!
She's sitting on the garden bench
Listening to a bird! (2:8)

The tone of mounting irritation is achieved in part by the series of questions that indicate the many jobs left undone by Mary.

There are several pair of rhyming lines. Those that do not have a rhyme are integrated into the whole of the poem by the use of other elements of musical language. The sound of "ar" in "Mary" is repeated in "dairy," "stair," and "there." Repetition of "here is a nice to-do," "what," and "well" helps to build the mood of the poem.

I MEANT TO DO MY WORK TODAY

Richard LeGalliene

I meant to do my work today--
  But a brown bird sang in the apple tree,
And a butterfly flitted across the field,
  And all the leaves were calling me.

And the wind went sighing over the land,
  Tossing the grasses to and fro,
And a rainbow held out its shining hand--
  So what could I do but laugh and go? (31:69)

The appealing distractions of outdoors are made more appealing by the musical, descriptive language that describes them: the alliteration of "brown bird" and "butterfly," the consonance of "butterfly flitted," the suggested personification of the "wind...sighing" and "rainbow held out its . . . hand," and the internal rhyme of "all . . . calling."

The conversational effect of the question, "So what could I do but laugh and go?" serves to directly involve the reader with the poem.

Comparison of this poem with "Where's Mary" by Ivy O. Eastwick provides the reader with opposite points of view about bird-watching instead of working.

A SWING SONG

William Allingham

Swing, swing,
Sing, sing,
Here! my throne and I am a king!
Swing, sing,
Swing, sing,
Farewell, earth, for I'm on the wing!

Low, high,
Here I fly,
Like a bird through sunny sky;
Free, free,
Over the lea,
Over the mountain, over the sea!

Up, down,
Up and down,
Which is the way to London Town?
Where? Where?
Up in the air,
Close your eyes and now you are there!

Soon, soon,
Afternoon,
Over the sunset, over the moon;
Far, far,
Over the bar,
Sweeping on from star to star!

No, no,
Low, low,
Sweeping daisies with my toe.
Slow, slow,
To and fro,
Slow--slow--slow--slow. (31:35-36)

This poem is a kinesthetic image that causes the reader to feel the ride in the swing. This is achieved through the rhythm of the poem and the pattern of repetition chosen as a stanza form.

Assonance of contrast contributes to the slowing down of the swing. In the first stanza most of the vowels are made well forward in the mouth, but the vowels shift backward until in the final stanza most of the important words have vowel sounds made at the back of the mouth. The consonants, as "p," "d," and "t" in the line "sweeping daisies with my toe," also contribute to the slowing down. Punctuation is an additional clue in the last line, but even without it the vowel diphthong in "slow" along with the euphony of the repetitions of "I" would cause the reader to slow down.

A poem "A Swing Song" very nearly does.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Dorothy Baruch

I climbed up on the merry-go-round,
And it went round and round.
I climbed up on a big brown horse
And it went up and down.
Around and around
And up and down,
Around and round
And up and down,
I sat high up
On a big brown horse
And rode around
On the merry-go-round
And around
On the merry-go-round
I rode around
On the merry-go-round
Around
And round
And
Round. (2:109)

This poem has kinesthetic imagery; one can feel the merry-go-round go around. The rhythm of the poem is slow at first as the rider gets on. Both the use of cacophonous consonants and the longer line length are contributing elements to this tempo. After the merry-go-round begins it

gains momentum quickly, and then begins to slow down. Once again, the use of consonants (the "b" of "big" and "brown" and the "g" of "big") and the line length help to cause a slowing down. During the ride, the euphony of repetitions of "r" and "n" and the vowel diphthong in the word "around" causes the ride to whirl right along.

Spacing also serves to cue the final slowing to a stop.

There are many kinds of repetition here, and all add to the total kinesthetic effect of the poem.

A PARADE

Mary Catherine Rose

A parade! A parade!
A-rum-a-tee-tum
I know a parade
By the sound of the drum.
  A-rum-a-tee-tum
  A-rum-a-tee-tum
  A-rum-a-tee-tum-a-tee-tum-
  a-tee-tum.
Here it comes
Down the street.
I know a parade
By the sound of the feet.

Music and feet
Music and feet
Can't you feel
The sound and the beat?
  A-rum-a-tee-tum
  A-rum-a-tee-tum
  A-rum-a-tee-tum-a-tee-tum-
  a-tee-tum. (6:122-123)

This poem is nearly pure rhythm, catching up reader and listener in the feel of a parade. It could be classified as kinesthetic imagery.

There is pleasure in saying the sounds of the drum. The repetition gives pattern both to consonants and vowels.

HIDING

Dorothy Aldis

I'm hiding, I'm hiding,
And no one knows where;
For all they can see is my
Toes and my hair.

And I just heard my father
Say to my Mother--
"But, darling, he must be
Somewhere or other;

Have you looked in the inkwell?"
And Mother said, "Where?"
"In the inkwell," said Father. But
I was not there.

Then "Wait!" cried my Mother--
"I think that I see
Him under the carpet." But
It was not me.

"Inside the mirror's
A pretty good place,"
Said Father and looked, but saw
Only his face.

"We've hunted," sighed Mother,
"As hard as we could
And I'm so afraid that we've
Lost him for good."

Then I laughed out aloud
And I wiggled my toes
And Father said--"Look, dear,
I wonder if those

Toes could be Benny's.
There are ten of them. See?"
And they were so surprised to find
Out it was me! (6:200)

The mock serious tone of this game Benny plays with his parents will be perceived and appreciated by the children. It is an experience they might have had earlier, but now they share the parent's point of view of the hiding game.

The effect of consonance in this poem has already been noted in the definitions section of this study.

THE SECRET SITS

Robert Frost

We dance round in a
ring and suppose,

But the Secret sits in the
middle and knows. (6:184)

The meaning of this short poem was indicated earlier in the discussion of symbols. Briefly restated, it is this: the ring is a symbol of the cyclic nature of life. We wonder about the meaning and purpose of life, but do not find the answer. That answer, known by the "Secret," the omniscient Being that is the center of our ring, remains a secret.

To a child this poem will suggest a circle game, perhaps with the "Secret" being "it."

Isn't that very nearly what we understand?

Smell, Feel, See

SNIFF

Frances M. Frost

When school is out, we love to follow
our noses over hill and hollow,
smelling jewelweed and vetch,
sniffing fern and milkweed patch.

The airy fifth of our five senses
leads us under, over, fences.
We run like rabbits through bright hours
and poke our noses into flowers! (2:107)

As the title indicates, the imagery in this poem appeals to our sense of smell.

There is feminine rhyme between "follow" and "hollow" and "senses" and fences." Masculine rhyme occurs in "hours" and "flowers." Slant rhyme is found in "vetch" and "patch." The variety adds interest.

The dictionary defines "vetch" as a bean-like vine used for fodder. Somehow its fragrance seems questionable, perhaps due to the cacophonous "--tch." However, not all smells are sweet, and the other kinds are smell-worthy, too.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF WONDERFUL SMELLS

Zhenya Gay

The world is full of wonderful smells,
And you have a nose that always tells
Of bread in the oven, hot and nice,
Of cake being baked with lots of spice,
Of a barn with fresh-cut hay in the mows,
Of horses and pigs and cats and cows,
Of a dog when he's warm and lies in the sun,
Of applesauce and chocolate and a sugar bun.
Wouldn't it be dreadful if you'd no nose to tell
Of every wonderful, wonderful smell? (2:105)

The imagery appealing to the sense of smell was discussed earlier in the definitions section of this study.

The many smells mentioned run the gamut from spice cake to pigs. The wonder, then, of "wonderful" is that there is such variety and that we can experience and enjoy them all.

The repetition of "and" and "of" help the poem to move smoothly and easily as it tells of the many "wonderful smells."

WHEN I WAS LOST

Dorothy Aldis

Underneath my belt
My stomach was a stone.
Sinking was the way I felt.
And hollow.
And Alone. (6:117)

This poem is a kinesthetic image. Anyone who has been "lost," even momentarily, feels again the hollowness and aloneness when reading this poem.

The strength of the feeling is communicated in part by the short sentences. The assonance of "long o" in "stone," "hollow," and "alone" also adds to the effect. The last two lines seem almost to be after thoughts, expanding and developing the situation that is given in the title.

COLOR

Christina Rossetti

What is pink? a rose is pink
By the fountain's brink.
What is red? a poppy's red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? the sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro'.
What is white? a swan is white
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? pears are yellow
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? the grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? Why, an orange,
Just an orange! (6:322)

This poem seems to say that some things are so unique that they can only be described in terms of themselves. The pattern of questions and answers contributes to understanding when the last question seems to be answered in the same term in which it is asked. "An orange" of course is different than "orange," but there is a kind of paradox in admitting it.

In a way we are prepared for a change in the pattern of question and response by a change in the rhyme pattern. Prior to the last four lines the rhyme had been total rhyme, either single syllable or double syllable. "Violet" and "twilight" change that pattern, even though they do have assonance in the sound of "i" and consonance in the sounds of "l" and "t."

The rhythm change of the last line also adds emphasis.

The euphony of "rich and ripe and mellow" is pleasant on the tongue and on the ear.

Thoughts and Scenes

TO MAKE A PRAIRIE

Emily Dickinson

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,--
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do
If bees are few. (33:1215)

It could be charged that "revery" is outside the vocabulary of the first grade child. My rebuttal is that he day-dreams, so he knows the process, and might well have another name for it. "Revery" rolls on the tongue in a way that "day-dreaming" does not.

The poet is going to make "a prairie"--not a pasture, which would suggest purpose, or a meadow, which would limit size. "Prairie" has a connotation of vastness and resistance to the civilizing efforts of man. Is she saying that our revery, or day-dreams, our aspirations, need not be limited by the here and now? I think she is.

A WORD IS DEAD

Emily Dickinson

A word is dead
When it is said,
  Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
  That day. (57:71)

Of course, words do not really die, but, unlike old soldiers, neither do they fade away. Once said, they remain spoken forever; once given life, they live with us from that time on. By implication we are cautioned to say only those words with which we would want to live.

The alliteration of "some say," the consonance of "word . . . dead . . . said," and the cacophony of "just begins" and "that day" all contribute to the poetic effect by musical effect and accenting of important words.

I'M NOBODY

Emily Dickinson

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us--don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog! (57:80)

The joys of anonymity are extolled by inference in this poem that minimizes the importance of public recognition. The use of the cacophonous "bog" after the ehphonious adjective "admiring" serves by anti-climax and contrast to impress the meaninglessness of being "somebody."

The connotative meanings of "frog" and "bog" are also a part of the total effect of the poem. A frog is cold, green, spotted, and makes a most unpleasant sound. A bog is damp, flat, and maybe even treacherous. Small comfort is there in being somebody--an unpleasant thing in an unpleasant place.

DUST OF SNOW

Robert Frost

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued. (42:118)

This poem tells us that unexpected, even trivial, happenings can affect our emotions. The imagery is largely visual with the impression first of a black crow in a snow covered tree, then a movement by the crow brushes snow from the tree onto someone near.

There seems to be a repetition of assonance of contrast, the positioning the front and back of the mouth occurring in almost every line: "way . . . crow," "shook . . . me," "change . . . mood," "saved . . . part," and "day . . . rued."

Children will need help understanding the word "rued."

THE RAINBOW

Christina Rossetti

Boats sail on the rivers,
  And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
  Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
  As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
  And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
  Is prettier far than these. (51:127)

This poem compares man-made things that sail or bridge with natural things that sail or bridge, and finds the natural things more appealing.

The metaphor calling a rainbow a "road from earth to sky" supplies a new view of rainbows. Usually a rainbow is either the symbol of God's promise not to be flooded again or something to find a pot of gold at the foot of. This third meaning expands experience.

The rhyme scheme is interesting. "Seas," "these," "please," and "trees" are in single syllable rhyme. "Rivers" and "sky" are repeated rather than rhymed, and "heaven" is alone.

To some degree "pretty" seems inappropriate, as if minimizing or diminishing the grandeur and magnificence of the natural phenomena. Perhaps it is a deliberate thing, to cut them down to people size in order to better understand them.

AFTERNOON ON A HILL

Edna St. Vincent Millay

I will be the gladdest thing
  Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
  And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
  With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
  And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
  Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
  And then start down. (31:64)

The real emotion of this poem is hidden, obscured, by the tense of the verbs. On the surface it is a happy plan for an afternoon, but underneath it is a wish to withdraw from the realities of life--for a brief period--in order to regain perspective about one's role and place in life ("mark . . . mine").

Repetition of "I will" serves both to strengthen the resolve to go and to develop the plan for the afternoon.

The children will respond to the visual imagery of this quiet afternoon on a hill.

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep. (70:521)

This poem gives me so much pleasure that I feel compelled to share it with the first graders. To me it speaks of the "promises" or responsibilities that keep us moving

down the one-way street of life. Dark woods on one side and a frozen lake on the other give one no choice but to go forward. The "harness bells" of life are all the demands on our attention that interrupt our quiet moments.

The first grader will respond to the visual imagery, the rhythm, and the musical language. To have early experience with this poem is to deposit in the bank of memory a treasure that may be drawn upon many times in future years.

SOME ONE

Walter de la Mare

Some one came knocking
  At my wee, small door;
Some one came knocking,
  I'm sure--sure--sure;
I listened, I opened,
  I looked to left and right,
But nought there was a-stirring
  In the still dark night;
Only the busy beetle
  Tap-tapping in the wall,
Only from the forest
  The screech-owl's call,
Only the cricket whistling
  While the dew drops fall,
So I know not who came knocking,
  At all, at all, at all. (2:145)

The poet has used many techniques to achieve the unique mood of this poem. At first the reader expects to feel slightly frightened by the unexpected knock of the unknown visitor. Up through the phrase "still dark night" the accumulated connotative meanings tend to suggest that

something to fear may be beyond the door. That suggestion of fright is stilled by the enumerating of the usual kind of night noises, even though the knocker remains unknown.

Euphony results from the consonance of the many words that contain "l": "small," "listened," "looked," "left," "only," "wall," "owl," "call," "whistling," "whistling," "fall," and "all."

Alliteration in "dew-drops," "busy beetle," and "tap-tapping" adds to the musical effect of the poem. Repetition also adds to that effect, as in "sure---sure---sure" and "At all, at all, at all." The latter repetition results in assonance of pattern.

THE MOON'S THE NORTH WIND'S COOKY

Vachel Lindsay

The Moon's the North Wind's cooky,
He bites it, day by day,
Until there's but a rim of scraps
That crumble all away.

The South Wind is a baker.
He kneads clouds in his den.
And bakes a crisp new moon that--greedy
North--Wind--eats--again! (51:137)

This poem has been used to illustrate three separate areas in the definitions section of this study. It was indicated that the wind is personified, the theme was identified as the regularity of flux and change, and the tone was called one of calm acceptance.

The new way of thinking about the moon presented in this poem is especially imaginative. Most often, when described imaginatively rather than scientifically, the moon is thought of as either being made of green cheese or

is personified as a man, as in "the man in the moon." Here we have an entirely different concept: the moon is a cooky that is eaten and replaced with regularity.

There are several kinds of musical language: rhyme in "day" with "away" and "den" with "again," alliteration in "crumble" and "crisp," and assonance in "kneads," "greedy," and "eats."

THE MOON

Elizabeth Coatsworth

The fields are spread like tablecloths
  which the Moon puts out to dry,
and she has washed the high hilltops
  and whitened all the sky.

Now pale, serene, and weary,
  she glances round the night.
Is every flower silver?
  Is each wild eyeball bright? (59:174)

The personification of the moon as a tidy housewife gives added meaning to this moon-lit scene and supplies us with yet another way to think about the moon.

There is assonance of similarity in the series "pale, serene, and weary" and regular assonance in "wild eyeball bright" and "round" with "flowers."

REEDS OF INNOCENCE

William Blake

Piping down the valleys wild,
  Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
  And he laughing said to me:

'Pipe a song about a Lamb!'
  So I piped with merry cheer.
'Piper, pipe that song again;'
  So I piped: he wept to hear.

'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
  Sing thy songs of happy cheer!'
So I sung the same again,
  While he wept with joy to hear.

'Piper, sit thee down and write
  In a book that all may read.'
So he vanished from my sight;
  And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
  And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
  Every child may joy to hear. (50:329)

The repetition of the various forms of the word "pipe" has been noted earlier in the definitions section in the discussion of repetition.

This poem may not have a unified meaning. Blake's mysticism enabled him to see things that others do not see. It seems to me that the poem suggests or hints at meaning.

"Lamb" is traditionally a symbol of sacrifice or of innocence, perhaps a bit of both. Here it seems also to have some quality of holiness, as it is capitalized. Could the "Lamb" in the song and the "child" in the cloud be the same thing?

If so, it could help to understand the paradox of a happy song causing a child to weep: "While he wept with joy to hear." If the lamb and the child are the same, and both are Jesus Christ, what could cause both happiness and tears? Perhaps the knowledge of the sacrifice required of him would cause both happiness and tears.

The "happy songs" written down could then be the "good news" of the gospel (the literal translation) and the "every child" who may "joy to hear" is each person in the world to whom the gospel brings the good news of Christianity.

I do not mean to say that this is what Blake meant when he wrote the poem. This is what Blake's words suggest to me.

The musical qualities of the poem, the rhythm and the sounds of the language, are qualifications enough to give it a place in this anthology and in the heart of every child.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The emphasis of this study was on the critical, rather than the utilitarian, choice of poetry by teachers, specifically first grade teachers. A review of the bases of criticism and children's literature specialists identified first the important role of poetry in education and then revealed what has been perceived to be the nature of poetry.

Criteria formulated after that review identified for the first grade teacher the particular qualities, as discovered by the study, that should form the basis of choice. Briefly restated, those qualities are: (1) that the poem should give pleasure to both teacher and students, (2) that the poem should have some elements of musical language, (3) that the poem should contain some essence of experience that will heighten awareness, and (4) that the poem should speak to the child as equal, it should not have a condescending tone.

It is conceded that any discussion of poetry, because of the very nature of poetry, is highly subjective.

The problem recognized and stated in this study continues; the development of critical discrimination on the part of the teacher needs to be begun anew in each new teacher who is preparing to enter a classroom. In order to help develop this critical discrimination, or "taste," and to give poetry its proper place in every classroom, the following recommendations are made:

1. All elementary school teachers should have a course in poetry separate from the study of other kinds of children's literature. This course should be taught from a critical rather than historical or biographical point of view.

2. English majors should be encouraged to consider becoming elementary school teachers. A secondary school has a limited number of English teachers, but in an elementary school every teacher is an English teacher. People who have majored in English are likely to bring to the classroom a respect and love for the use of language, well developed reading skills, and exposure to many kinds of poetry that hopefully has begun to develop taste.

3. Children should have many and varied listening experiences with poetry.

4. Especially in first grade, memorizing of poetry should not be required. It may result anyway from the repetition of a beloved poem; this is truly "learning by heart."

Poetry should not be used; it should be experienced. It should not be taught; it should be shared. In the early years of school it should not be studied; it should be enjoyed. "Poetry <u>can</u> be studied, and perhaps it should be, by some people at some time. But it should be loved before it is studied, else love of it may be lost forever" (20:xxi).

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