

Note how the rhythm is broken in the very first word (going along with the sense), as well as across lines 2 and 4 (all part of the poet's complaint). Notice the conceit (extended metaphor) in the second stanza, and the paradox of the final couplet.

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to'another due,
Labor to'admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly'I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you'enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

–John Donne

Note how the poem begins with a question, a comparison that will be explored. Note the volta, or turn, following the eighth line (the octave). Note the parallelism in the closing couplet.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

–William Shakespeare

Note the head-to-toe description of the object of love (known as blazon) which extends the conceit (extended metaphor) of the woman's smell being compared to various flowers.

Sonnet 64

Coming to kiss her lips, (such grace I found)
Me seemed I smelt a garden of sweet flowers:
that dainty odours from them threw around
for damsels fit to deck their lovers' bowers.
Her lips did smell like unto Gillyflowers,
her ruddy cheekes, like unto Roses red:
her snowy brows like budded Bellamoures
her lovely eyes like Pinks but newly spread,
Her goodly bosom like a Strawberry bed,
her neck like to a bunch of Cullambynes:
her breast like lillies, ere their leaves be shed,
her nipples like young blossomed Jessemynes,
Such fragrant flowers do give most odorous smell,
but her sweet odour did them all excel.

–Edmund Spenser

Note the use of apostrophe (addressing an inanimate or absent audience—death), the comparison between death and sleep, and the paradox at the end combined with another apostrophe, giving the poem symmetry.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate
men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

–John Donne

Note the way that Herbert sets up a scene in this sonnet, and sparingly and effectively uses direct address in the final line to make a sudden, heightened conclusion.

Redemption

Having been tenant long to a rich Lord,
Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,
And make a suit unto him, to afford
A new small-rented lease, and cancell th' old.

In heaven at his manour I him sought :
They told me there, that he was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly bought
Long since on earth, to take possession.

I straight return'd, and knowing his great birth,
Sought him accordingly in great resorts ;
In cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts :
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth
Of theeves and murderers: there I him espied,
Who straight, *Your suit is granted*, said, and died.
—George Herbert

Note that this is in Petrarchan form, both with respect to the rhymes (ABBA/ABBA/CDE/CDE) and the volta after the eighth line

Sonnet: On his blindness

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
I fondly ask; but Patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best, his state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait.
—John Milton

Note the use of polyptoton (multiple forms of a word) with “alter” and “alteration”, and synecdoche (whole represented by a part): “bark” (=ship); and the repetition and inversion of “s” and “k” sounds in line 10: (“sickle’s compass come”).

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his highth be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come,
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved
—William Shakespeare

Note how the Petrarchan ideal of beauty is comically inverted (but quite seriously so, as the final couplet suggests). The meter is upset in the first word of line two (“Coral”) as if to signal that the Petrarchan ideal is also being upset.

Sonnet 130

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

Note the use of anadiplosis (repeating at the beginning of a new phrase a word or words used at the end of the previous one) causing a climactic pattern in the first stanza starting with "pain" on line 2. Also note the use of personification (Muse) and direct address for rhetorical effect.

Astrophel and Stella - 1

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,--
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,--
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.
Thus great with child to speak and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

–Sir Philip Sidney