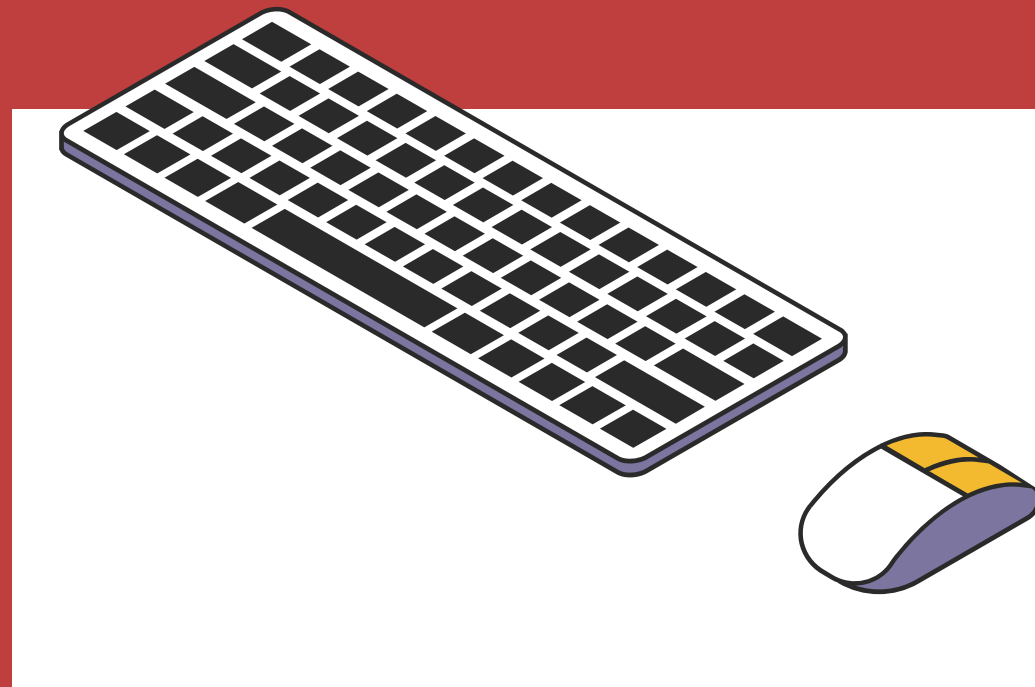


POETRY

LECTURE 9

PROSODIC FEATURES: METRE (FREE VERSE, MAXIMISATION PRINCIPLE AND METRICAL GRID, METRICAL DEVIATION, SUBSTITUTIONS, RECITATION)



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the use of metre in Free Verse, Maximisation Principle and Metrical Grid, Metrical Deviation, Substitutions, and Recitation.
- Have better skills to analyze the metre in some different poems.





Free Verse



Metrical Deviation



Maximisation Principle
and Metrical Grid



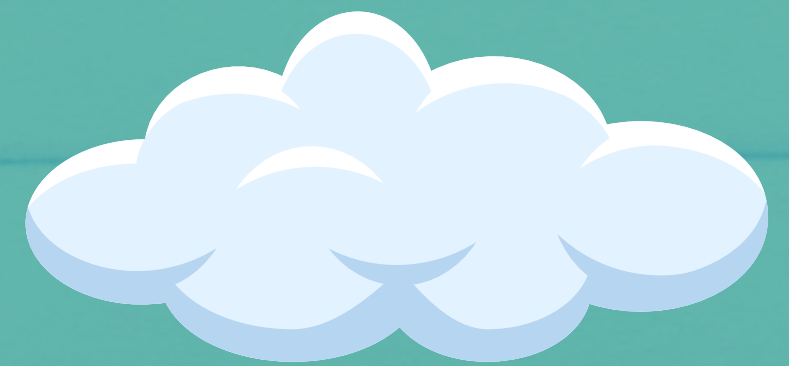
Substitutions



Recitation

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

WHAT IS FREE VERSE?



FREE VERSE

=

FREEDOM

?

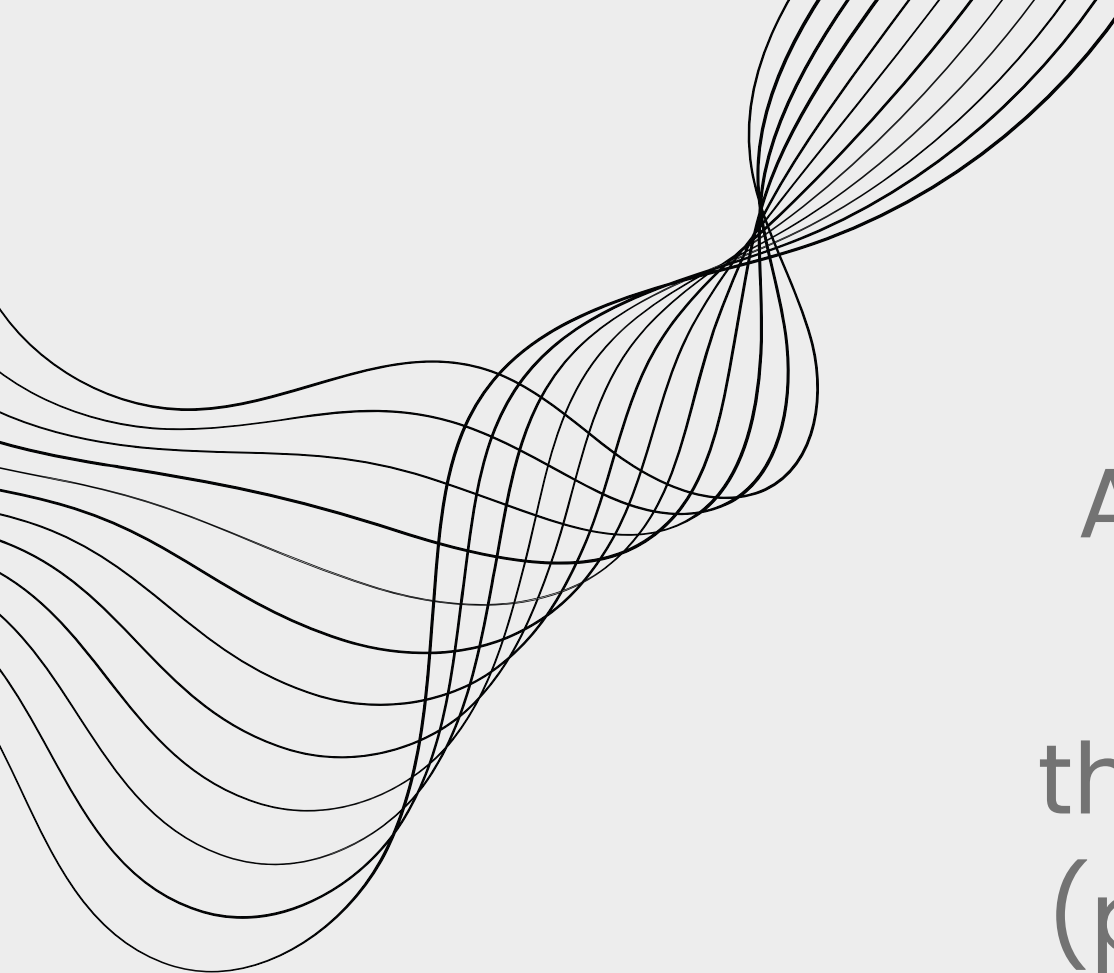




FREE VERSE

Free Verse does **not use any particular pattern of stress or number of syllables** per line. Although without regular metre, it is not without rhythmic effects and organisation. Free verse can be organised around syntactic units, word or sound repetitions, or the rhythm created by a line break.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



An effect pleasing to the ear, such as “Did he who made the Lamb make thee?” from William Blake’s “The Tyger” (p. 653), is called euphony. A jarring or discordant effect, such as “The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!” from Lewis Carroll’s “Jabberwocky” (p. 566), is called cacophony.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007)





onomatopoeia

It occurs when the sound of a word echoes its meaning, as it does in common words such as bang, crash, and hiss.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007)



“The Bells”
Edgar Allan Poe

Yet the ear, it fully knows,
By the **twanging**
And the **clanging**,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the **jangling**
And the **wrangling**
How the danger sinks and swells
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells,—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells. . . .

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007)




An Essay on Criticism
by Alexander Pope

Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when the loud surges **lash** the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent **roar**:
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too Labors, and the words move slow.

lash and roar to convey the fury of the sea, and he uses repeated consonants to echo the sounds



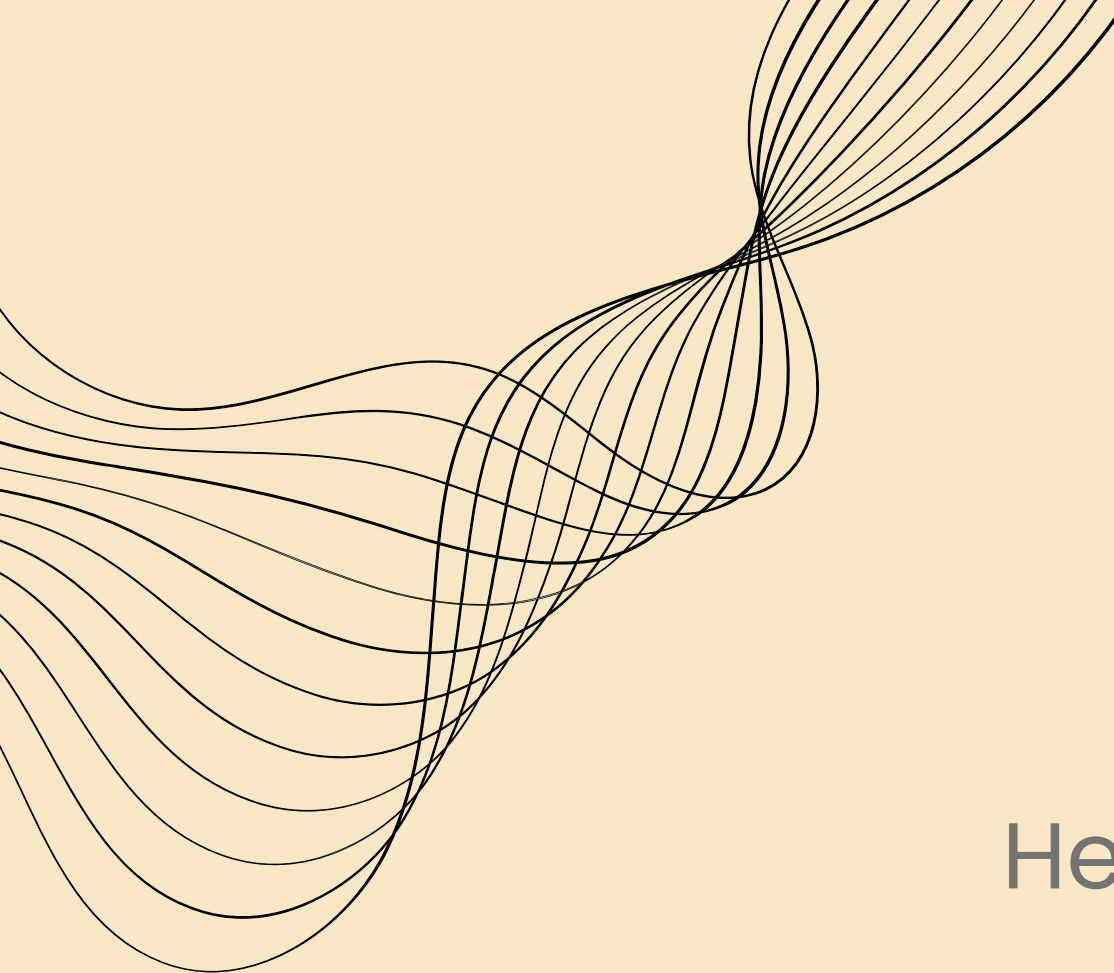
(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007)



Alliteration—the repetition of consonant sounds in consecutive or neighboring words, usually at the beginning of words—
is another device used to enhance, sound
in a poem.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007)



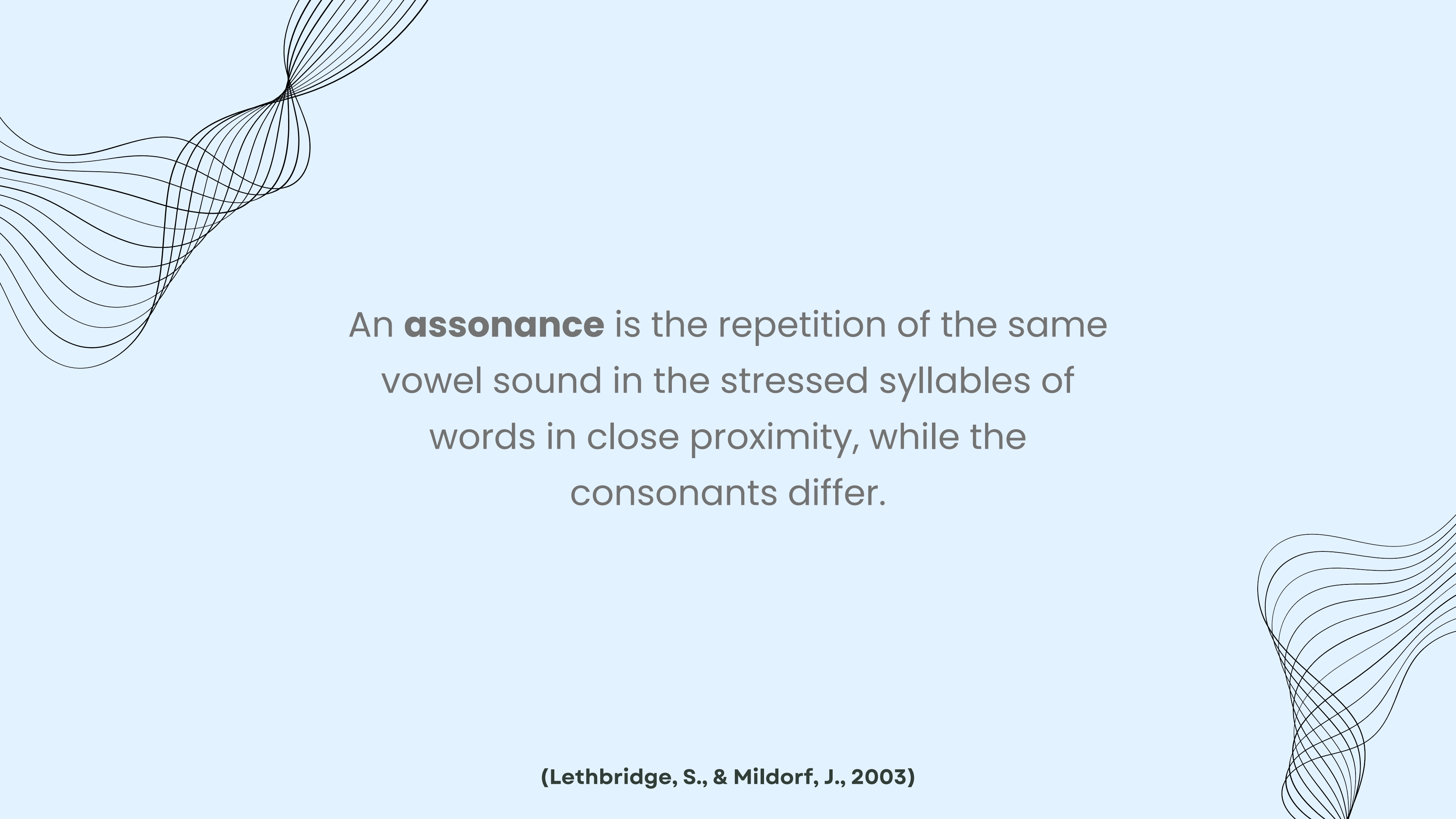


The Eagle
ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

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.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007)





An **assonance** is the repetition of the same vowel sound in the stressed syllables of words in close proximity, while the consonants differ.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



Delight in Disorder (1648)

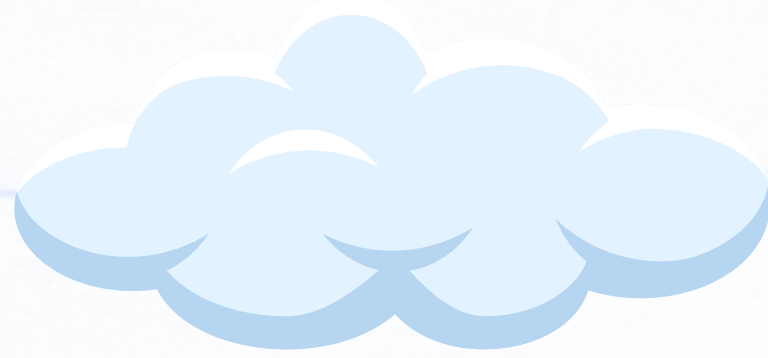
ROBERT HERRICK

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness.
A lawn ° about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction;
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthralls the crimson stomacher;
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly;
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat;
A careless shoestring, in whose tie
I see a wild civility;
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

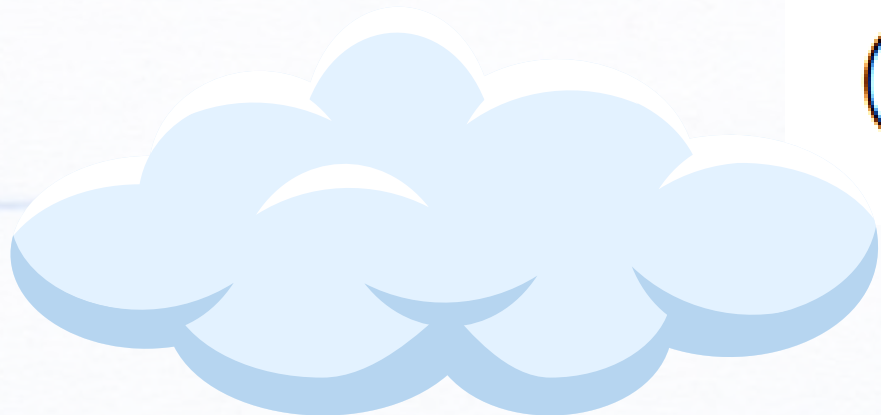
(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007)



TRY THIS!



Some quick to arm,
some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness,
some from fear of censure,
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,
some learning later ...
some in fear, learning love of slaughter;
(From: Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*)



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

THIS TOO!



Sisters

She calls me tofu
because I am so soft,
easily falling apart.

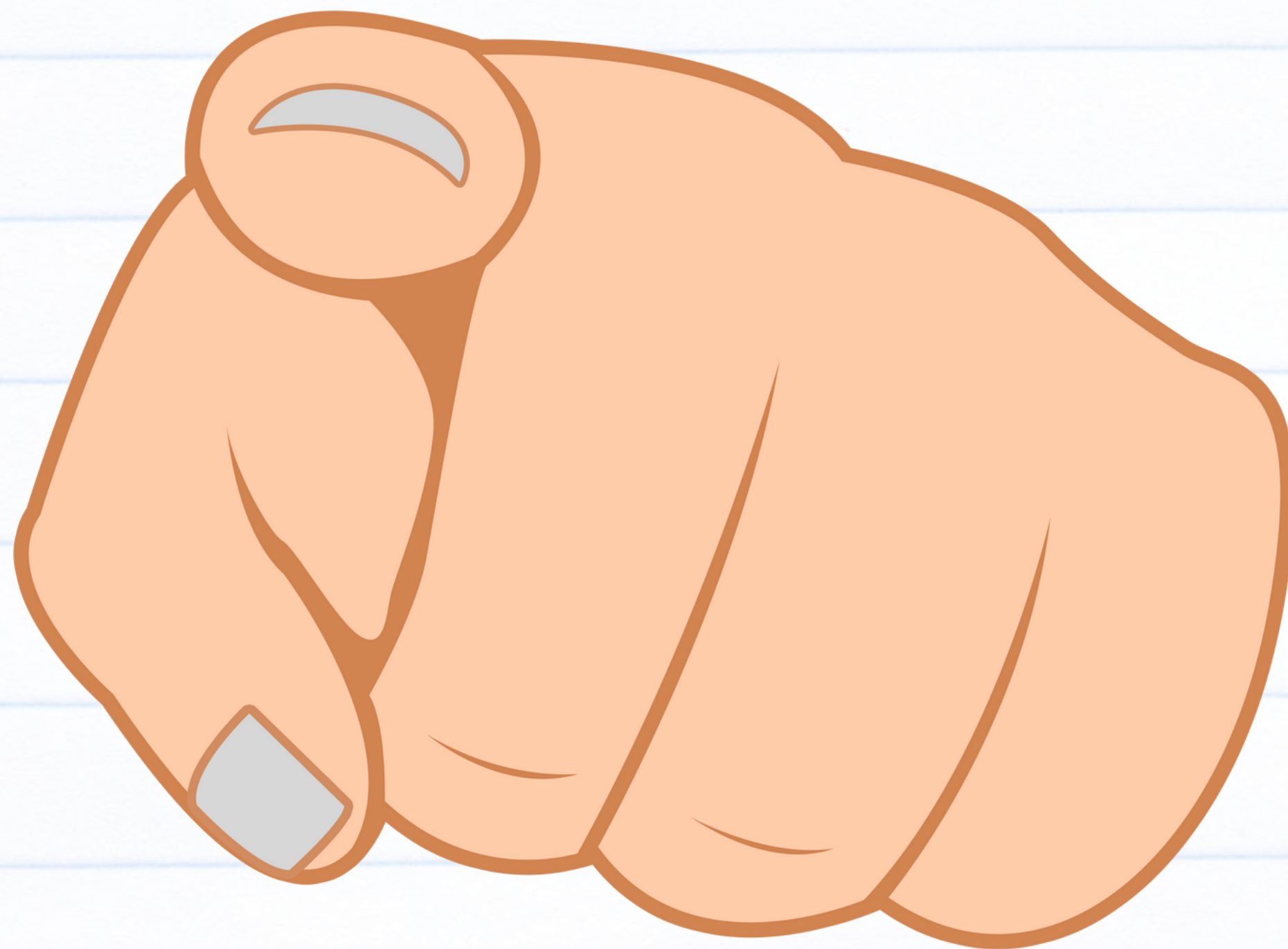
I wish I were tough
and full of fire, like ginger—
like her.

A Suitcase of Seaweed and other poems
© 1996 Janet Wong. All rights reserved.

Pic 1 : <https://www.reneelatulippe.com>



MAKE YOUR OWN FREE VERSE!





MAXIMAL PRINCIPLE

METRICAL GRID

MAXIMISATION PRINCIPLE AND METRICAL GRID

IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO DETERMINE A METRICAL PATTERN. IN FACT, QUITE FREQUENTLY A SERIES OF SYLLABLES ALLOWS FOR MORE THAN ONE ARRANGEMENT OF ACCENTS.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

example!

TRY PRONOUNCE THIS!

**NATURE IN HER THEN
ERR'D NOT BUT
FORGOT.**

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

example!

NATURE IN
HER THEN
ERR'D NOT
BUT
FORGOT.

WE COULD FIND 2 PATTERN

1 0 0 1 0 1 0 1

Nature in HER then ERR'D not BUT forGOT

1 0 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 1

Nature in HER then err'd NOT but forGOT

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



NOTES

When such an ambiguous line (ambiguous as to metrical pattern) occurs in a poem, the lines around this problem line need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the metre.

example!

‘Yet Cloe sure was form’d without a spot -’
Nature in her then err’d not but forgot.
‘With ev’ry pleasing, ev’ry prudent part,
Say, what can Cloe want?’ – she wants a Heart.
She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;
But never, never, reach’d one gen’rous Thought.
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
Content to dwell in Decencies for ever.
(From: Pope, *Epistle to a Lady*, 157-164)

MAXIMISATION PRINCIPLE AND METRICAL GRID

The lines surrounding our problematic line are all very clearly iambic (except maybe the line “Say, what can Cloe want? [...]” which seems to be iambic with one spondee at the beginning). Because we have a tendency to continue a particular rhythm once it has been started – change is always unsettling – we almost automatically continue to scan according to the pattern that has already been set.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



MAXIMISATION PRINCIPLE AND METRICAL GRID

On the basis of the **maximisation principle**, we tend to establish a metrical grid in our heads, that is, we form the expectation of a certain pattern and once it is established, we expect it to continue. The whole poem is read against this metrical grid and it is on this basis that deviations are noted.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

example!

‘Yet Cloe sure was form’d without a spot -’
Nature in her then err’d not but forgot.
‘With ev’ry pleasing, ev’ry prudent part,
Say, what can Cloe want?’ – she wants a Heart.
She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;
But never, never, reach’d one gen’rous Thought.
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
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(From: Pope, *Epistle to a Lady*, 157-164)

Rather than saying the first line is iambic, the second dactylic, the third iambic, etc., we say the poem is iambic with two irregularities in initial position





METRICAL DEVIATIONS

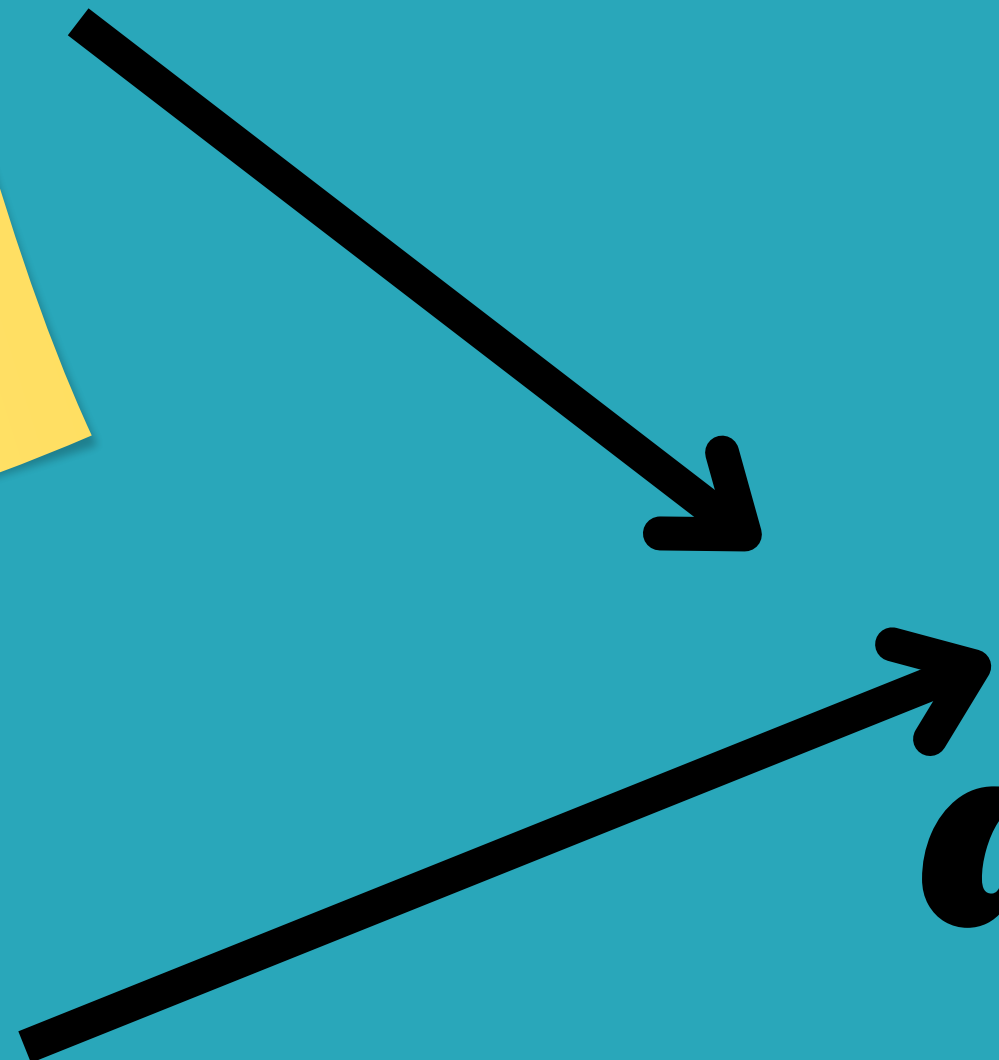
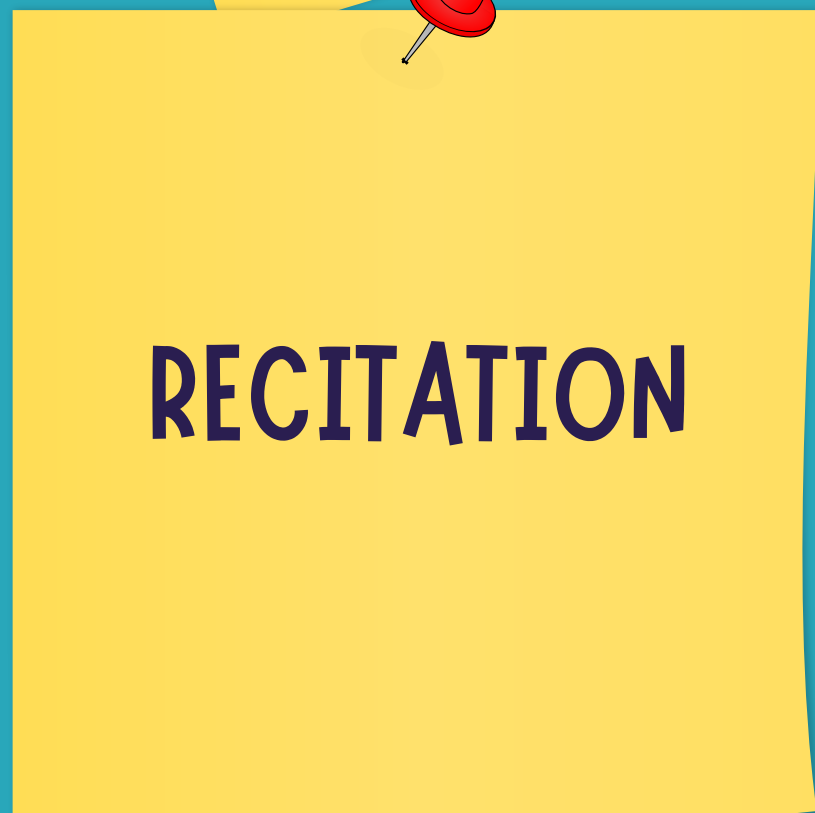
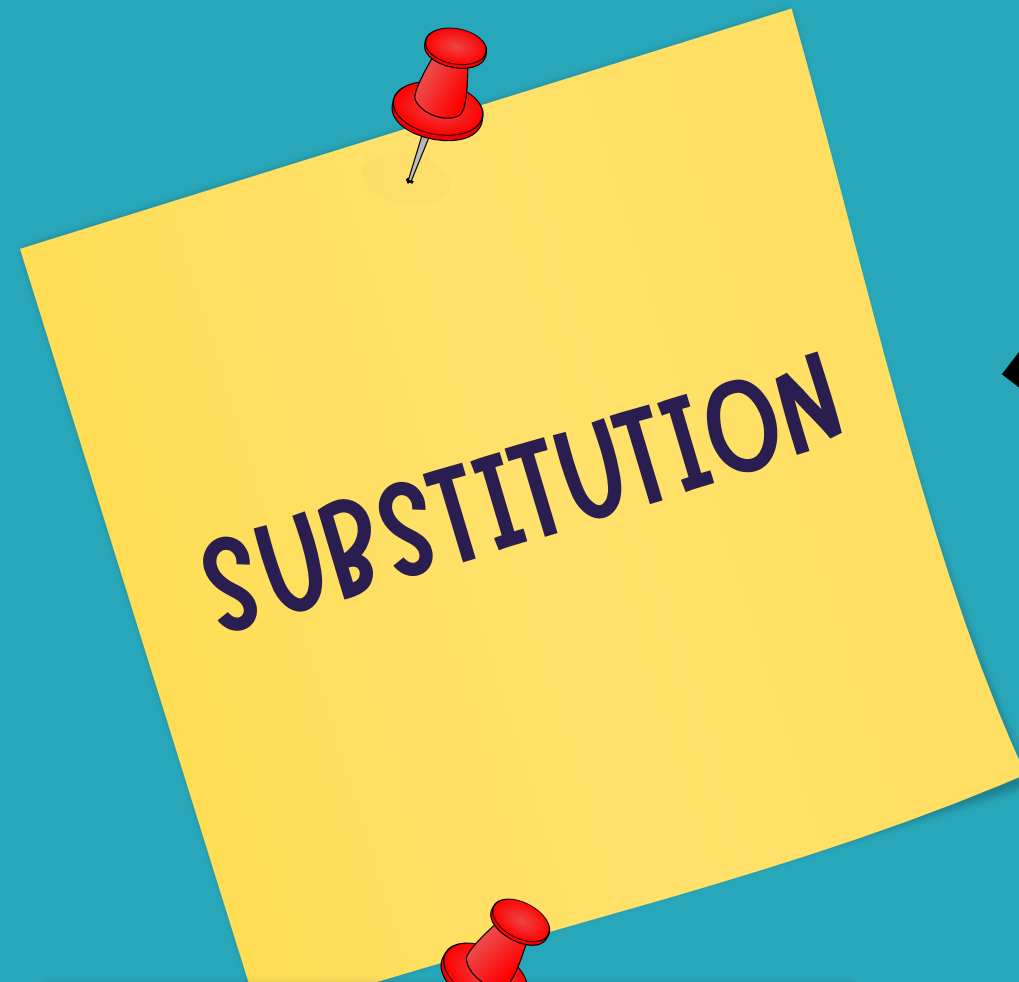
A poem that scanned with absolute regularity would more than likely jingle on in insufferable tedium. This danger is circumvented by little deviations that break the regular pattern of the metrical grid.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



METRICAL DEVIATIONS

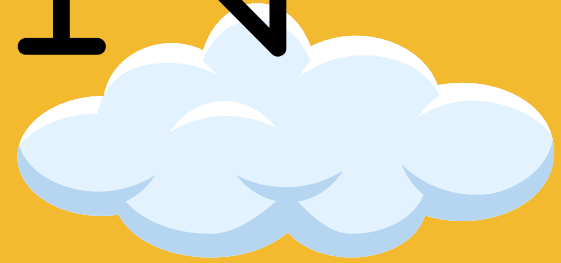
THOSE TWO FACTORS CREATING



***Metrical
deviations***

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

SUBSTITUTION



@reallygreatsite



To break the monotony of regular metre, poets often substitute one metrical foot from a regular pattern with another

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



example!

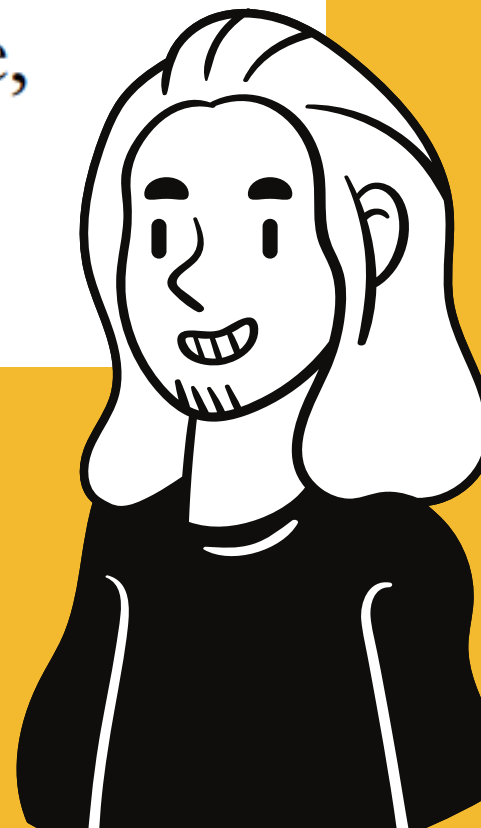
What dire Offence from am'rous Causes springs,
What mighty Contests rise from trivial things,
I sing – this Verse to *Caryll*, Muse! is due;
This ev'n *Belinda* may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my Lays.
(From: Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, 1-6)

example!

These lines are fairly regular iambic pentameter except the beginning of line 5 "Slight is", which is a trochaic foot. This not only breaks the monotony of the iambic pentameter (broken once before by the caesura in line 3) but it is also rather witty because it puts an unexpected emphasis on "Slight", which semantically indicates that it deserves little emphasis.

What dire Offence from am'rous Causes springs,
What mighty Contests rise from trivial things,
I sing – this Verse to *Caryll*, Muse! is due;
This ev'n *Belinda* may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my Lays.
(From: Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, 1-6)

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



RECITATION



RECITATIONS

**Regular speech
and recitation**

Specially stressed

Little stressed

Normally stressed

Half stressed

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

**Stress placed by the
metrical pattern will be
ignored for certain effects**



Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heavenly Muse [...]
(From: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I)



This poem is written in blank verse but it is almost impossible to recite it with a regular iambic pattern. The first line could be more easily read like this: Of MAN's FIRST (half-stress) disoBEdience (pause) and the FRUIT of that forBIDd'n TREE (pause) whose MORTal TASTE etc.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heavenly Muse [...]
(From: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I)

**A RECITATION IS ALWAYS AN
INTERPRETATION OF THE POEM AND
THERE IS NO ONE POSSIBLE RECITATION,
THOUGH METRE AND RHYTHM SET
CERTAIN LIMITS WITHIN WHICH
INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATIONS CAN
OPERATE**

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

THAT'S A WRAP!

THANK YOU FOR THE PARTICIPATION!





REFERENCES

- Pic 1 : <https://www.reneelatulippe.com/free-verse-for-rhymers-lessons-from-the-other-side/>
- Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J. (2003). Basics of English Studies: An introductory course for students of literary studies in English. Freiburg University, Freiburg im Breisgau.
- Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R. (2007). Portable literature: Reading, reacting, writing.(6th) Ed.