

# Bard Con Virtual

*presents*

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**Rhythm and Meter in Poetry**

A virtual mini seminar

*with*

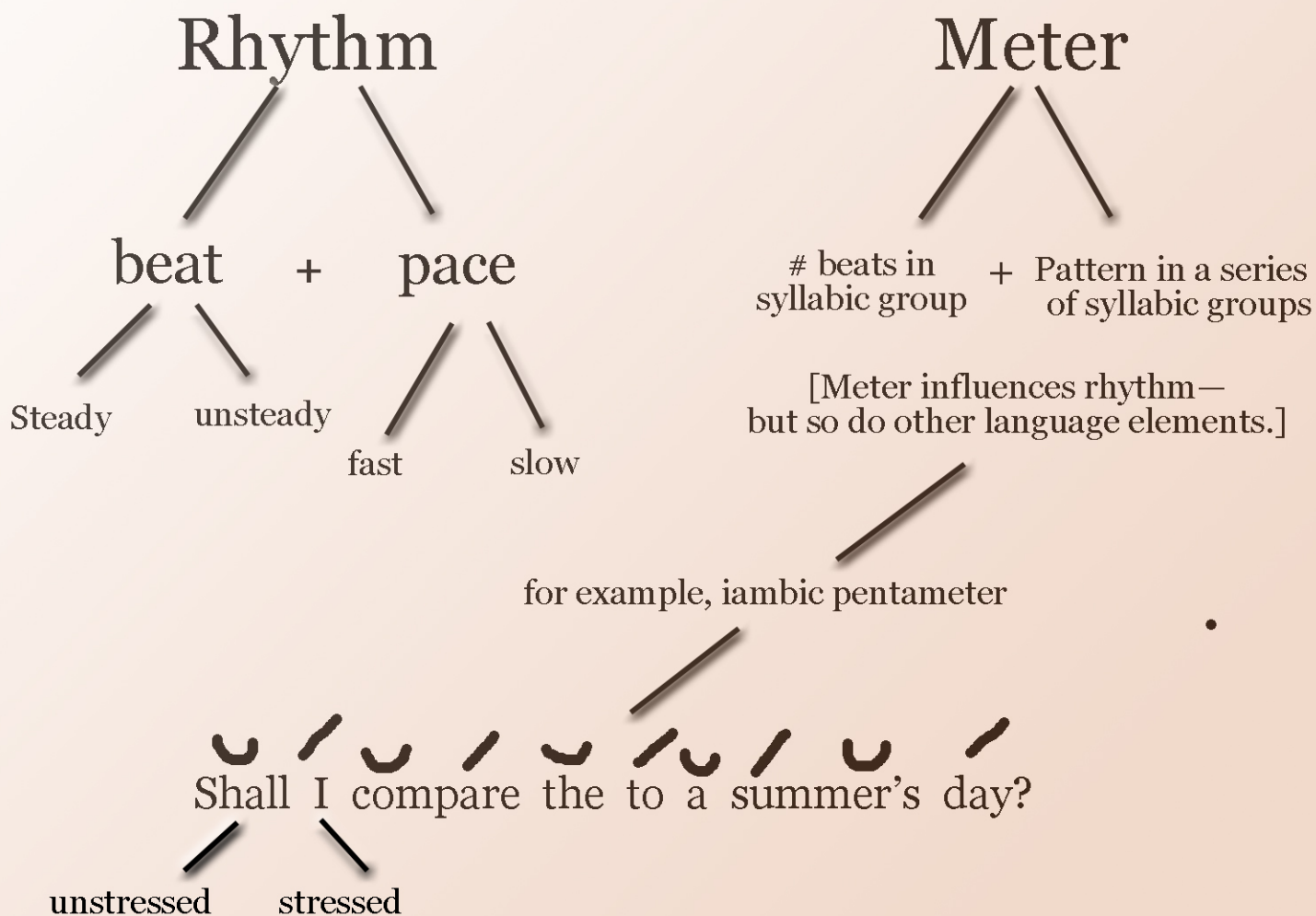
**Alex Edwards-Bourdrez**



Though we must be distanced physically,  
We're not forced to be distanced psychically.

# Rhythm and Meter in Poetry - Page 1

## DEFINITIONS



# DUST OF SNOW by Robert Frost

1 The way a crow  
2 Shook down on me  
3 The dust of snow  
4 From a hemlock tree  
5 Has given my heart  
6 A change of mood  
7 And saved some part  
8 Of a day I had rued.

Variation in rhythm

variation with anapest

# Hope is the thing with feathers

by Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land,  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.

# Rhythm and Meter in Poetry -- Page 5

- 1 Hope is the thing with feathers  
2 That perches in the soul,  
3 And sings the tune without the words,  
4 And never stops at all,
- 
- variation
- no variation

- 5 And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
6 And sore must be the storm  
7 That could abash the little bird  
8 That kept so many warm.
- 
- emphasis/insistence  
affects the tone

- 9 I've heard it in the chilliest land,  
10 And on the strangest sea;  
11 Yet, never, in extremity,  
12 It asked a crumb of me.
- 
- attention-grabbing emphasis;  
change of perspective
- slowing of rhythm: reflection;  
anticipation

## I dwell in Possibility by Emily Dickinson

I dwell in Possibility—  
A fairer House than Prose—  
More numerous of Windows—  
Superior—for Doors—

Of Chambers as the Cedars—  
Impregnable of eye—  
And for an everlasting Roof  
The Gambrels of the Sky—

Of Visitors—the fairest—  
for Occupation—This—  
The spreading wide my narrow Hands  
To gather Paradise—



## LET EVENING COME by Jane Kenyon

Let the light of late afternoon  
shine through the chinks in the barn, moving  
up the bales as the sun moves down.  
Let the cricket take up chafing  
as a woman takes up her needles  
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned  
in long grass. Let the stars appear  
and the moon disclose her silver horn.  
Let the fox go back to its sandy den.  
Let the wind die down. Let the shed  
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop  
in the oats, to the air in the lung  
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't  
be afraid. God does not leave us  
comfortless, so let evening come.

Let the light of the afternoon  
shine through the chinks in the barn, moving  
up the bales as the sun moves down.

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be afraid. God does not leave us  
comfortless, so let evening come.

Clusters of stressed syllables create a "heavy" sense and slow the rhythm down.

Periods inside the lines create significant pauses.

This line "enjambes" to the next line.

marked acceleration of rhythm: enjambment, long phrases between punctuation marks; regularity of "galloping" meter

rhythm slowed by internal punctuation



COMA MEDITATION

Sit. Be with your dad, she said.  
She shuffled soft-shoed  
Then slid away—a ghost  
Left behind a wisp of warmth

I descended—unconscious—  
To the chair—still—  
Floated there  
Soaked in wonder—gaze  
Caressing his contours.

Hundreds of times it has been so  
Since—every pore alive as then  
When every breath prepared  
His peaceful death

THE MILL

The flow of a song so soft,  
rolling relentless and pristine,  
fills each cup of recollection  
to turn the wheel on a sagging mill  
and grind the grist  
of nostalgia and regret.

It's an ingenious science:  
the freshness of the passing moments  
in this mechanical way usurped  
to serve a retrograde purpose,  
no sooner harnessed than spilled  
in a lazy, disappearing splash.

And so the generations flowed;  
the mill, weathered and peeled, indulged  
its churning habit in gentle rhythms,  
whipped in showdrifts, soaked in torrents,  
dappled in sunlight, adorned in dying leaves,  
striving to capture its fleeting life.

Thank you for taking this walk with me. •

I would cherish you feedback: alexeb2@gmail.com.



