

# WRITER'S INK

## THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF BLOOMINGDALE

### AUGUST 2008

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our August workshops will be on August 9th and August 23rd, from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

Format rules are: Minimum, 12-pt. font and double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.

The deadline for submissions to the 2009 Bloomingdale Public Library Writer's Workshop calendar is September 15, 2008.

#### METAPHORS

Another English Lit lecture I slept through:

"The **metaphor** is an implicit rather than an explicit comparison. It does not use the words "like" or "as" in its construction. The two things compared often seem very different, and the linkage often surprises and delights as well as it enlightens."

"And she balanced in the delight of her thought,  
A wren, happy, tail into the wind,  
Her song trembling the twigs and small branches."

(Theodore Roethke, *Elegy for Jane*)

"Little boys lie still, awake,  
Wondering, wondering,  
Delicate little boxes of dust."

(James Wright, *The Undermining of the Defense Economy*)

When a comparison of two things generally is repeated and extended throughout a poem, with repeated instances of imagery, it is called **extended metaphor**. When the comparison is particularly unusual or fanciful, it may be called a **conceit**."

Source:

A Poetry Handbook, by Mary Oliver,  
Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994, pp. 102-103.

#### SIMILE SPOTLIGHT

Once I start searching for similes, I find them everywhere.

"...Neal Brockman, whose immaculate surgeon's hands fluttered over his silverware **like tethered moths**."

"Something large moving about and casting quick, jerky shadows **like moving stains on the colorless rocks**."

"Worse, a familiar, nasty shadow had materialized near the baggage claim area and was rolling toward her **like a dry mist**."

"A sense of irritation surrounded them **like a weak electric field**."

"The manicured neighborhood felt like a set, a façade hiding secrets tangled **like frayed electrical wire**."

"Bo remembered a cruel chuckle floating in the fog **like audible teeth, like the smile of the Cheshire Cat** just hanging in wet air."

“...facing a life that at the moment seemed about as orderly as a buffalo stampede.”

Source:

Moonbird Boy, by Abigail Padgett, The Mysterious Press, 1996, pp. 87, 93, 100, 101, 110, 132, and 182 respectively.

### THOSE CONFUSING COMMAS

“Use a comma to separate similar or identical words standing next to each other, even when the sense or continuity does not seem to require it.

Whatever is, is right.

Whenever you go, go quickly.”

Source:

Shertzer, Margaret, The Elements of Grammar, Collier Books, 1986, p. 86.

### COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

Congratulations to members Chris Aument and Mary Ann Lufkin, whose submissions were accepted by the Blood and Thunder: Musings on the Art of Medicine, sponsored by the University of Oklahoma. Chris’ essay is entitled “Question” and her poem is entitled “Curtain Call”. Mary Ann’s poem is entitled “Introduction”.

The anthology is published annually in October. (If any other members were accepted, please forward your information for inclusion in future newsletters.)

New this month is “Poetry Corner” submitted by member, John Flaherty. Submissions from all members are welcome.

### POETRY CORNER

By John Flaherty

“The Villanelle”

The Villanelle is a very interesting poetic form. It is one of a number of poetic forms that have a rigid set of rules for their structure. These various forms include the Sonnet, Sestina, Triolet, Rondeau, and Ballade. These forms developed in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. To this day, a number of them are called French Verse Forms. Probably the most popular poem using the Villanelle form was, “Do not go Gentle into that Good Night.” written by the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas. Dylan wrote about his father’s impending death.”

The Villanelle consists of six stanzas, the first five contain three lines and the sixth contains four lines. It is generally written in Iambic Pentameter and the first line and the third line of each stanza have ending rhymes. In addition, the first lines of each stanza all have ending rhymes. The second lines of each stanza also have ending rhymes, so the rhyme pattern is: aba, aba, aba, aba, aba, abaa.

Also the first line is repeated at the end of the second and fourth stanzas, and as the third line in the sixth stanza. The third line of the first stanza is repeated as the third line in the third and fifth stanzas and as the fourth line in the sixth stanza.

The effect of all this repetition and rhyme can profoundly convey a message. This can be seen in Dylan’s poem. I’ll leave it to the reader to find his poem and to read it on a quiet evening when you’re alone. Try to read it out loud, as you imagine the author kneeling by the bedside of his dying father.

The following example is a Villanelle on a much lighter note. It was written by me. As you can see, it's about a Spring season where the cold weather has stayed around too long.

### A Late Spring

- 1 The morning sun appears and lingers high
- 2 Lost so long in the past gray cloudy maze
- 3 But still I do not hear Winter's goodbye
  
- 4 At night, moon-dogs show in the frosted sky
- 5 The dimly glowing circles fade from my gaze
- 6 as morning sun appears and lingers high
  
- 7 Now I can see and feel its warming eye
- 8 Couldn't see it in old, cold yesterdays
- 9 But still I do not hear Winter's goodbye
  
- 10 In shade it's cool; a few red robins try
- 11 to sing, don't see any bluebirds these days
- 12 as morning sun appears and lingers high
  
- 13 It softly glows so I cannot deny
- 14 the old willow now shows a yellow haze
- 15 But still I do not hear Winter's goodbye
  
- 16 The ropes that hold the South wind, I'll untie
- 17 to free the breeze then see the tulips blaze
- 18 With the early morning sun lingering high
- 19 I'll hear Winter's reluctant, sad goodbye

You can see how the pattern flows with the first line being repeated in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>, and the third line being repeated in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>. Some poetic license is allowed to change a few words in some of the refrains.

Also note the end rhymes. "Maze", "gaze", "yesterdays", "haze", "blaze", and "daze" all rhyme in second lines of each stanza. "High", "sky", "eye", "deny", "untie" are rhyme endings for the first lines. And the first line endings also rhyme with the repetitive third

line for each stanza. I've added additional internal rhyming, as is my personal style, but this is not required for this form. Note "old-cold", "grey-maze", "willow-yellow", "free-breeze".

There's a lot of rhyming in this form. This comes from its French origin. It's easier in the Romance Languages, than in English, to sustain multiple rhymes. One reason for this is that English words end in so many different ways, as compared to the Romance Languages. The Romance Languages convey meaning by word endings while English does it by word order: i.e., subject-verb-object.

The Villanelle is a difficult form to write but it's a lot of fun, and you should try it. If you're careful and get the rhyme and the rhythm correct, it can be a very effective way to communicate your thoughts and feelings.

#### Sources:

Ref. Deutsch, Babette. Poetry Handbook. HarperCollins Publishers Inc. New York, N.Y. 1974. Pp. 190 and 61.

Steel, Timothy. All's the Fun in how you Say a Thing. Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio. 1999. Pp. 12, 196, 197, and 336.

### ENJOY SUMMER!

From Mary Ann Lufkin  
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