



Squills



June 2009

Note from the Editor

Another incredibly late issue, and this time entirely my fault! I started compiling this issue with just over a month left in school. Well, that last month had me so far buried under work to finish my junior year at uni – plus YWS! – I’m still recovering, but this is a story we’re all familiar with. I hope this issue will be a pleasanter read than books for research papers, math tests, or finals!

Happy spring, and here’s to summer!

Meshugenah

Announcements

Member of the Month

Our very own Evi was selected as the Member of the Month for June! Congrats, Evi!

Young Writers Literary Journal

If you have not heard about it yet, the Young Writers Literary Journal is a publication of our very own Young Writers Society Publishing Company. Our first volume was published last year, and you can take a look at it on Amazon:

<http://www.amazon.com/Young-Writers-Literary-Journal/dp/0615195776/>

Our second volume will be coming out in late June/early July, and contains a variety of short stories & poems from around the world written by ages 12 to 21. Stay tuned to YWS for more details!

The New YWS

Look for details on the reimagining of YWS during the month from our amazing webmaster/admin, Nate! Don’t forget, when the change takes place, YWS will be down, so bookmark the backup site now! <http://yws.nathancaldwell.com/index.php>

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The Audacity of Critique

by Springrain

I once made my grandfather a jar of mulberry jam. At the time, I thought it was the best gift ever—the mulberries were ripe, and I had thrown a generous amount of sugar into the pot to make it even sweeter than it should have been. I even left out the lemon, just so that it would be entirely sweet, and undercooked it so that it wouldn't turn into a crystallized mess.

The day after I gave it to him, he phoned me to give me his feedback. He told me the jam was good, although slightly too sugary. He said that it was rather hard to use, too; it was stickier than honey and had what seemed to be chunks of sugar floating around in it, if you could even call it floating.

He told me that I probably should have used something with a slight acidity to it to keep it from firming up. He suggested not using so much sugar, because it overpowers the taste of the mulberries.

I was slightly disheartened. I felt like all of my efforts had gone to waste.

Two weeks later, when he was visiting again, I tried a second time.

I spent two hours picking a large basket of berries, and another hour picking out the best, juiciest ones. I sifted the sugar before adding it to the pot of berries, and made sure to add the lemon juice this time. Even though it was tedious, I cooked it slowly, stirring the pot for the next five hours.

Young Writers Society is centered on reviews. Everything we post is sure to get at least an ounce of attention, and nearly everything we post gets a review. Whether we review everything we read or not, we are almost sure to have an opinion on it.

In prowling around YWS lately, I noticed that some people give

negative critiques just because they do not agree with the subject that the story is centered on. While I think it's great to have your personal tastes and opinions, I think that some tact should and can be applied whilst reviewing and critiquing.

Often, as writers, we forget that we all have feelings for what we write. When we surrender our work to the outer world, we're setting it up for torture.

The story may not care about the torture it receives, but the author certainly does.

Even though the majority of authors on YWS do not voice or display their dismay when they receive a certain harsh review, I'm sure they feel it. How do I know? I've been there.

I have also noticed that when a person isn't on the best of terms with the author of a piece they're reviewing, they tend to take that opportunity to be as harsh as possible. For these reasons, I often tell reviewers to distance themselves from the author of a piece they're reviewing, so that even if they are best friends, they won't just say it's good so that they remain friends; even if the story is written by your worst enemy, pretend it's not, just for the review.

I commonly find myself telling reviewers to apply tact in their reviews, even if I only say, "Be nice!" It's important to, because your reviews leave a long lasting impression on the author, even if you've never noticed their username before.

I tell them to be open minded, too. If the story sounds like it's catered towards a group of five-year-olds, pretend you're a five-year-old while you read the story. If it's directed towards adults, pretend you're all grown up. This way, you can have a different mindset while you review. Even if it's

not your style or preference, you may find some slight benefit in it.

In the nine months that I have been on YWS, a few people have asked me for reviews, asking me not to be harsh and also asking me if so-and-so's opinion on their poem seems the same way to me. If the opinion seems negative, I try to look at the piece in as many different ways as possible, so that I can offer some type of praise, and even if my opinion is the same (in the negative) I try to put more emphasis on the parts that I liked most.

I tell those people to distance themselves from their writing, too. When asked how they're supposed to do that when writing is a part of them, I say, just the same as you let it go. If you have the heart to post it online, you have to gather the guts to distance yourself to allow just a little space between the cracks for criticism.

Sure, criticism is hard, but so is writing. Wallace Stegner once said, "Hard writing makes easy reading."

After I gave my grandfather the second jar of mulberry jam, he phoned me the next day—just as he had done before—to tell me how much I had improved. He went into detail about how much he enjoyed the delicate taste of mulberry, the consistency, and the perfect sweetness. I smiled as he told me that, because it was his criticism that taught me how to make it perfectly—and I'm sure he knows that.

So, remember! Welcome criticism and give criticism, but be constructive. It's no use tearing down what's being built up. Give it a chance to survive, and leave a lasting impression on that author—but make sure it's positive.

And while you're at it... review war, anyone?

Making Your Fantasy Real

Magic

by Rosey Unicorn

Magic is what makes fantasy, fantasy. It's what marks fantasy as different from sci-fi, romance and all other genres. If a story has magic in it, people consider it a fantasy. It's the very fact that magic is common that makes it so hard to get right.

What some writers do, when trying to craft a magic for their world, is have the magic fix everything. Every single problem is fixed by a simple flick of a finger. The problem with that is, if everything were fixable by magic, what challenges would your Main Character have to face? Think about it. If magic fixes all conflict, and conflict is plot, where does that leave your story? That's right. You wouldn't have a story.

Let's go to the other end of the spectrum then. Magic is near impossible to use. It leaves spell casters drained for days for even the smallest spells; large spells simply kill the person because they take so much energy. And half the time, spells don't even work because they are so complicated. Where does that style of magic leave you? Sure, it allows conflict, but do you really want your MC (Main Character) to spend most of their time resting just because they had to use magic to light a candle? Didn't think so. If magic costs too much, then it's not only a pain for your characters to use, it's a pain to write around, since you spend all your time writing summaries of what happens while the character is recovering from a spell.

What's the answer then?
Meeting somewhere in the middle.

Finding a middle ground between cost and difficulty in magic is a tricky balancing act. There is also scarcity, but let's leave that alone for now. At the moment, we want to find the best balance between how much strength it takes to cast a spell (cost) and how



difficult it is to cast one (difficulty).

So, how do you know what the best cost and difficulty range is? I'm sorry to say there is no straight-forward answer to that. It all depends on your world and what your plot needs to move along at a good pace. A good rule of thumb is: The more commonly a spell is used, the less energy it should take and the less difficult it should be to cast. Therefore, the less often a spell is used, the more difficult it should be and the more energy it should. If your characters are constantly using reflective surfaces

as a kind of video-chat, don't have that spell take up a lot of energy. However, if your character needs to control a flood for the climax but they've only controlled trickles of water before, have them need lots of rest once that spell is over. Remember: The rarer the spell, the more it should cost and the more concentration it should require to cast.

And finally, a mention on scarcity. How rare magic-wielding beings are in your world has a huge influence on your fantasy society as a whole. If healers are common, expect your overall population to live longer. If weather-mages are rare, don't have perfect weather all the time; you might even have those weather mages well hidden with very high standards for accepting other mages. Whatever choice you make, though, be sure that it fits your plot.

When crafting a magic for your world, find a good balance between how much a spell costs energy-wise and how difficult it is to cast. Avoid all-powerful spell casters like the plague, for nothing stalls a plot faster. If your plot requires there be a secret group of shape-shifters, don't have members of that group telling everybody and anybody about their powers, because when crafting a magic for your story, you must be sure there is logic behind all decisions you make.

Part 2 will feature more on magic. Stay tuned!

God of the Month

Wen Chang

by JabberHut

How's April treating you folks? Did you drop NaPoWriMo again? Did Script Frenzy eat you alive? Is there any other event I'm forgetting? How did that one go?

Well, if you're still at it, I'm praying for you—to Wen Chang, of course. There's no better god to turn to!

From Chinese Mythology, the god of literature and poetry is known as Wen Chang or Twen-Ch'ang, meaning 'prosperous knowledge.' He was once a great scholar who became a great deity, and is usually seen holding a scepter in one hand and dressed as an official.

Unlike many of us, Wen Chang had an ugly face, to be blunt, contradicting his brilliant mind; he was so smart in fact, he was eligible to take the emperor's scholar exams for the Golden Rose, an honor among the Chinese. As any myth or legend goes, our hero was successful and approached the emperor for his reward; however, the emperor laid eyes on the scholar's terrible face and refused to give him the Golden Rose. Quite rude, I dare say!

Wen Chang was horrified, and he ran to the sea to drown him-

self. He was on the line of death when a sea fish or monster saved him and raised him to the heavens where he now sits near the Great Bear. The Chinese say that when

diplomas and Imperial Exams. Zhu, also known as "Red Coat," was responsible for seeking jobs for scholars and to protecting weak students. In fact, one legend says

that when a young scholar turned in a poorly-written essay and the professor was about to fail the young man, Zhu appeared before him, without saying a word or making a sound, nodded his head in, accepting the student. The professor, utterly speechless, passed the student.

I may need him for my current research paper...and possibly my next one. Perhaps Wen Chang will lead you all to victory during this wonderful month of April, NaPo, and Screnzy.

May the literature flourish during these times!

To read more about

Wen Cheng, check out the following articles, which were used to compile this article!

<http://historychina.ru/260.html>

<http://www.taoistsecret.com/taoist-god.html>

<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/w/wen-chang.html>

<http://www.csupomona.edu/~plin/folkreligion/litgod.html>



the six stars of Wen Chang shine brightly, the world of literature flourishes and excels—the happy hour for us writers.

The god of literature is also seen with his two cronies, K'uei Hsing and Zhu (spelling varies). K'uei Hsing was another brilliant but ugly man who suffered from dwarfism, and was in charge of



Writing Humour

A Beginner's Guide

by Kitty15



Lesson Two: Timing

It's essential that a joke is timed just right. If you spend too long setting it up and throwing explanations at your reader, your edge is blunted by the tedium of information. But if you neglect to mention something essential and jump straight to the punch line, your reader just isn't ready. Take for instance, this situation:

Yang Chi sat puffing on his pipe, Rose unfolded her map and in the corner Jose began to play Greensleeves on the grand piano.

"Why is there a grand piano on board a space ship?" Joe wondered.

You might find that funny, or the man sitting in the corner, wearing his striped dungarees and playing the banjo might have found it funny. But I don't. There's the potential for a snicker, but the trouble is, the situation hasn't been laid

out before the punch was thrown. If the audience already knew that the characters were on a spaceship and happened to know that Yang Chi is a very small Japanese man with an affliction for pipes while Jose is an astonishingly prodigious character of the Spanish affliction whose name is actually pronounced Ho-zay then you might get a chuckle. But to be honest, the real giggle of the scene is Joe himself because the character who has the audacity to ask why a grand piano might be aboard a space ship is actually an excursionist collecting research (which roughly translates to tourist) and dressed in Hawaiian shorts while posing as the ship's mechanic.

So I've shown you a bad joke but what about a good one? I'll not pretend to be an expert so instead I'm going to rip off someone else's material. If you've not heard this one before then I'll take

full credit for finding it but otherwise you'll have to forgive my lack of reference because it's been repeated much too often for me to find the original author:

A linguistics professor was lecturing his class one day.

'In English', he said, 'A double negative forms a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However, there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative.'

A loud voice from the back of the room piped up, 'Yeah, right.'

The timing here is perfect: it's short enough that the reader doesn't lose interest or have enough time to anticipate the end but also long enough that all the information is available. This isn't just two men discussing language, it's a student proving a language professor wrong. It's perfectly set up.



Every April is the commemoration of poetry: one month to celebrate one of the most diverse and fascinating parts of culture. Part of this festivity is the smaller, quieter cousin of the National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). Rather than furiously writing 50,000 words in 30 days, National Poetry Writing Month (NaPoWriMo) instead calls on its participants to pen a poem a day throughout April. A more subtle and slower task,

NaPo

by Firestarter

although possibly just as difficult, NaPoWriMo has its own sub-forum on the Young Writers Society. Many members have been posting their efforts in individual threads there so far.

A poem every day is a draining creative task.

But the positives far outweigh the negatives. By forcing yourself to create a new piece each day, NaPoWriMo instils in its participants the routine of writing po-

etry. As a haphazard, scattered poet myself, I understand how endlessly helpful this is in encouraging writers to increase their artistic output. After all, one of the most critical parts of poetical development lies in experimenting through new writing. Beyond that, it can also be fun. By the end of April, with thirty new poems in your collection, something which can often take months, you also have a comforting sense of achievement.





Interview with Evi

by Lin910



Lin: When did you first start writing?

Evi: I started writing when I was about six years old, after discovering the Nancy Drew novels. That summer I went through notebooks and notebooks writing my own little mysteries.

Lin: Who encourages you to write?

Evi: Well, honestly, not very many people know that I write. At least, they don't know that I write seriously. My parents have read very little of my writing --only one story, really-- and my friends haven't read anything. YWS encourages me, I guess. And in 6th grade I won my school's Young Author Competition, which really boosted my moral.

Lin: What do you like most about writing?

Evi: That's a difficult one to answer, because I write for so many different reasons. Sometimes I write just to escape my own head and be able to explore somebody else's for a chapter or two, and sometimes I write to explore a situation that I think would be interesting. I love how writing can be so many things to different people, since everyone's style is different. I love being able to say, 'I wrote that. That was from my heart.'

Lin: As a writer, how do you take positive criticism? How about negative criticism?

Evi: As a writer, I write for two groups: myself, of course, because it makes me happy, and the readers, whom I can never forget. Their opinions always matter. That doesn't mean I change every single thing someone else tells me I should change, but I do try to take all suggestions into consideration. As for positive criticism, that's much easier to deal with. I always love to hear that somebody enjoyed what I wrote; that's the point, yes? I thank them, and try to keep improving. Their positive feedback fuels my self-confidence.

Lin: What do you love about YWS?

Evi: Like I said, not very many people in my life know that I write. YWS is

a place just for that, where I can truly get unbiased opinions and criticism on my writing without worrying that the reviewer is just trying to make me feel good. I love the community feel, how you actually make *friends*. I didn't expect that to happen. YWS is amazing.

Lin: Not many people know, but you are actually 12, younger than the majority of people on YWS. What would you like to say about that?

Evi: Even though this is the Young Writers Society, I find myself talking to people older than I would be talking to in "real life". Sixteen-year-olds normally don't associate with me, but here we're all one giant community. I like being one of the younger members, actually. I feel as if I have more to prove, and I like a challenge. I also feel like the older members can act as mentors, kind of. Being twelve is great, and I'm going to enjoy it while I can.

Lin: Now, a lot of people on YWS know you as the one who wrote the YWS fanfic that a million people loved. What do you have to say about that?

Evi: That was honestly a big surprise! Ask Rosey, June, or anti-pop: I was terrified to post it, afraid anything I had written might offend somebody. I was afraid the people I *hadn't* included would be angry. But the response was overwhelming-- 62 stars as of right now-- and I'm thrilled that people enjoyed it. YWS fanfics are a lot of fun to write, and the second one should come out mid-April, if I can find enough jokes to put in it. So, to anyone reading this, PM me if you have ideas! I need them!

Lin: What would you like to say to everyone who commented and starred your fanfic?

Evi: I can say nothing else but, "Thank you!" And, of course, comment and star the next installment, also.

Lin: Do you believe that you have become a better writer ever since you have started writing?

Evi: Well, given that I started writing when I was six, I really, truly hope I have! But yes, definitely. I never really cared what kind of random nonsense I pounded out until just recently, so I think I've started to actually write, not just to write, but to get a finished product that I can be proud of. Writing the piece is the fun part, of course, but it's extremely satisfying to be able to say that you finished something that's actually *good*. Something that you're proud of. So yes, I think I've improved.

Lin: Out of all the things you have written, what do you like the most?

Evi: Two things. I have finished exactly three stories, front to back. The first two would make prime example of, "What not to do." But the third, even though it is by no means great, and the plotline fizzles out towards the end, was something I actually finished. It also won a contest. As for the thing I like the most out of what I've posted on YWS, I'd have to say my first short story, "Dusting Off Angels." It was short, but I was happy with the scene that I set up, and the readers seemed to like it too.

Lin: What advice would you like to give to everyone on YWS?

Evi: Not just YWS-- writers everywhere. You have to keep going. Experiment with different things, explore different sides of your writing; I think you'll find that, in doing this, you're discovering new things about yourself as well. I may not be an expert in absolutely everything to do with writing just yet-- it's a learning process, after all, and I still plan to improve every step of the way. But I do know that as long as writing is something that you enjoy, there's never going to be a good reason for you to give up. Once you're staring at that wonderful, beautiful finished product in your hands, you'll know exactly how rewarding it can be.

Book Review

The Hunger Games, by Suzanne Collins

by Evi

It is hundreds of years into the future, and the world as we know it no longer exists. In its place is Panem, a nation divided into twelve Districts with a central Capitol to rule over all. After a rebellion against the Capitol years before, an annual tradition has been developed to remind the Districts of their place: The Hunger Games.

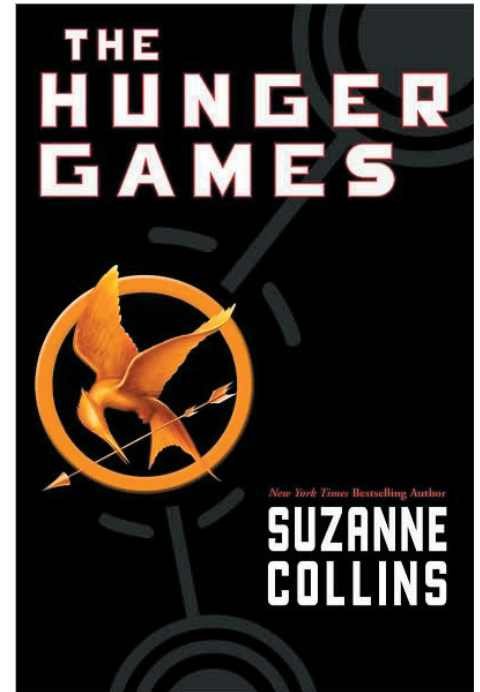
Designed as entertainment for the Capitol, this brutal death-trap is hardly a game for those unlucky enough to be chosen as participants; it is a battle of survival against twenty-three other teenagers, in which the winner of the Games is the last one alive. It is a battle to the death, where no one is to be trusted, and nowhere inside the arena is safe.

Living in the slums of District Twelve, Katniss Ever-

deen has kept her mother and her younger sister fed ever since her father perished during coal mining. When her twelve-year-old sister's name is drawn to participate in the Games, Katniss steps forward to volunteer as a replacement. Swept into a world of high fashion, wealth beyond her wildest dreams, and a range of characters that will surely leave a lasting impression on readers, Katniss finds herself battling for her family, her friends, her morals, and her life.

The Hunger Games is an immensely entertaining read that will have you gasping at wild plot-twists and reveling in the perfect balance of romance and action. Readers should be warned, though; in a situation where the only way to survive is to dispose of the competition, The Hunger Games has

its fair share violence, injury, and death. Suzanne Collins has spun a captivating tale of a girl discovering herself under the direst of circumstances, where nothing is as it seems and death is on the line.



Screnzy

by Teague

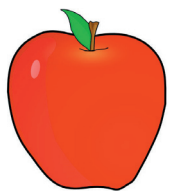


Script Frenzy, or Screnzy for short, has begun! Writers have the 30 days of April to write a 100-page script. Sound like a familiar concept? Well, Screnzy is hosted by the same folks who came up with National Novel Writing Month. Stop watching. Start writing.

For more information just visit:

www.scriptfrenzy.org





Instructors' Corner



Poetry

Classicism

by Blink

As you might have guessed, this type of poem recounts classical civilisation. It follows no structure, but its themes concern the principles of beauty, characteristic in the Greek and Roman arts. Although one might believe (quite logically) that the 'beauty' concludes emotional exhibition, the poetry does in fact deal with form and discipline far more so than the typical power found in Romanticism, using simplistic and yet formal voice. Such poems dwell traditionally upon the aesthetics of the eras, letting the reader come to his own conclusion. Alexander Pope and John Dryden are both poets notably fond of classicism forms; the former of these wrote *Eloisa to Abelard*, expressing emo-

tional restraint in a not-so-short poem. Put simply, romanticism, realism and classicism are all connected; romanticism dreams on how things should be; realism explains how things are; and classicism, as it would be ideally. These terms overlap, and they are very old; they have advanced over the years in some growing incarnation.

But that's all back-story. Why would someone enjoy writing classicism? After all, it's a dull affair; the doctrines dictate that the writer must be guided by rules, mythology, satire or ancient history, and not by explicit revelations of imagination. They must be inspired by what already is and was, making it nothing but derivative tripe, right?

Wrong. Teenagers have long had a sickly problem to express themselves in a way that is barely anything other than self-gratifying mush. I don't care about loneliness or obesity or sadness that comes in typical modern poetry; said poets tend not to be aware of what's happening, and so continue to write poem after poem of 'I'm sad, I need attention, I'm at school, in detention.' It's annoying and selfish. Classicism, on the other hand, helps you escape that. You are writing about what has already happened, focusing on aesthetics and no emotional strings. Another advantage is that it can be fun to research and maybe you can be a miniature Tolkien, who enjoyed creating mythology for himself. The past leads to the future, remember that.

Sonnets

by Mars

A sonnet is a type of rhyming poem that has fourteen lines, divided into two sections. Typically, they compare two related but different things in order to make a point about them. Sonnets also have "turn" – a change in subject matter that occurs usually, but not necessarily, at the beginning of the second section. This is called the *volta*. There are many different types of sonnets, but I'll focus on the basic three.

English sonnets have been around since the early 16th century. They are sometimes called Shakespearean sonnets, not because he invented them (it was actually Thomas Wyatt) but because he is the most famous person to write them. These sonnets are comprised of three quatrains (four lines) and one couplet (two lines), with a rhyme scheme of: a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-e-f-e-f-g-g

The *volta* occurs usually in the third stanza or couplet. In Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, he compares a lover to a summer day, then decides that the summer is impermanent and not as beautiful. The turn is at line 9, at the beginning of the third stanza, where the comparisons end and he captures her beauty so that it will live forever in the poem:

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest;
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

Spenserian sonnets are a variation on English sonnets, named for Edmund Spenser. They have a rhyme scheme of:

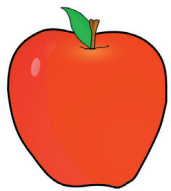
a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c-c-d-c-d-e-e

There are still three quatrains and a couplet, but the second and fourth lines of the first stanza provide the rhymes for the first and third lines of the next one, and so on.

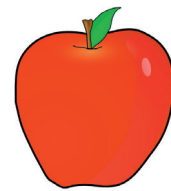
Italian, or Petrarchan, sonnets are a little different. Instead of quatrains, they have one octave (eight lines) and one sestet (two tercets, three lines each). The rhyme scheme for the octave goes:

a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a

The sestet is a little more flexible, and different rhymes have been used; most commonly c-d-e-c-d-e, c-d-c-c-d-c, and c-d-c-d-c-d. In Italian sonnets, the *volta* comes at line 9, at the beginning of the sestet.



Instructors' Corner



Poetry

The Limerick

by Demeter

Limericks are a form of narrative poetry. They're generally considered humorous and light-hearted, and often include a witty conclusion or a satirical remark in them.

A standard limerick consists of five lines of which the first, the second, and the fifth one have seven to ten syllables, with the third and fourth having five to six. Also, the 1st, 2nd and 5th lines should rhyme with each other, as well as 3rd and 4th (therefore, the rhyme scheme of limerick is AABBA).

An Englishman called Edward Lear is one of the best-known limerick writers – in fact, he's the one who popularized it all with his first Book of Nonsense (1845), which consisted of only limericks. Here's one example of them.

"There was an old man with a beard,
Who said, 'It is just as I feared!'
Two owls and a hen,
Four larks and a wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!'"

As this example shows, the first line of the limerick is often used to introduce a person. The last line can be more or less a repeat of the first one, although the effect isn't used very much in modern limericks.

Alliteration, puns, or other kinds of word play are almost like a trademark of limericks, though remember that in arts, nothing is obligatory! It shows if you're trying too hard, and forced rhymes or punch lines won't amuse anyone in the end. So, the most important thing is to have fun – that way, the others will too.

Cinquain

by Blink

A cinquain refers to, in fact, any short poem with just five lines ('cinq' meaning 'five'), and so, of course, there are many such subcategories. However, most commonly we consider Crapsey's cinquain (invented by a poet of the same name) when the umbrella term is said. It is often used to define a character or a setting—many writers will benefit from its simplicity to build upon these topics. The syllable structure is 2, 4, 6, 8, 2, to give the idea of an increasing story and then a conclusion. This style is very similar to that of many Japanese styles.

However, the simple order of syllable counting and the amount of lines really doesn't help to generate the poem; a setting is built up, which makes it an excellent method for, as previously stated, creating themes, stories, and even a basic plan. I've never actually met a writer who plans in this way, so maybe I just invented some-

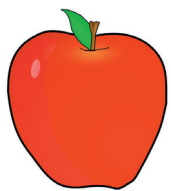
thing amazing. I don't know. Contemplate it as you will. The cinquain is thus:

(Introduction) *The title of the story.*
(Build-up) *Two words for describing the title,*
(Plot) *What can the title do?*
(Emotions) *Describe the feelings and the emotions.*
(Conclusion) *A short flashback to your title.*
See?

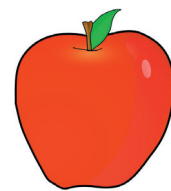
One of the most famous cinquains by Crapsey herself is called Triad. Cinquains are fantastic because they get to the point, and some poets use them as a forerunner to another poem so that the thoughts can be put down simply, without imagery and suffocating words. Crapsey is, in a sense, the Hemingway of poetry; she puts aside flowery excess and she throws the bones of her theme into a single cluster. To create your own, a

good way to set up the idea is to create a small table, with three columns. In one, put a few nouns to do with the title ('kitchen' might be part of 'house', for instance). The second column should see a verb ending in -ing, and the adjectives fit in at the end. It's going back to basics for a moment, but it still makes you wonder what adjective to use, and not whether there should, at all, be one, as many writers fear that they do wrong, clumping together random description in the hope that a story about a big tree becomes a masterpiece. It doesn't work.





Instructors' Corner



Poetry

The Ghazal

by Demeter

Ghazal (pronounced “ghuz-zle”) is an old, originally Persian poetic form that is usually set to music around its home region. Its themes deal mostly with romantic or unattainable love, and in fact the word ghazal itself means “talking to women”.

A typical ghazal consists of five to fifteen couplets (also called shers) and a refrain. The refrain, in this case, is a word or a phrase that gets repeated at the end of both lines of the first couplet, and at the end of each following couplet. Thus, the rhyme scheme of a ghazal is AABACA-DAEA and so on. Every line must also share the same meter.

Each couplet of a ghazal should be a complete sentence (or several ones), and a poem of its own. This, however, doesn't mean that in one couplet you should talk about your crush's beautiful smile, and in the next one you move on to tell a story about a random hamster and its red balloon. It just means that you can't start a sentence and make it continue in the next couplet. Don't worry about the possible abruptness – the repeated refrain is there to connect the couplets.

The ghazal writer may, if he so wishes, make the final couplet appear as his signature by including in his name, pen name, or something other that's a reference to him.

The following is an example of an English ghazal, written by Agha Shadid Ali.

*“Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell tonight?
Whom else from rapture's road will you expel tonight?”*

*Those “Fabrics of Cashmere--“ ”to make Me beautiful--“
“Trinket”-- to gem-- “Me to adorn--
How-- tell”-- tonight?*

*I beg for haven: Prisons, let open your gates--
A refugee from Belief seeks a cell tonight.*

*God's vintage loneliness has turned to vinegar--
All the archangels-- their wings frozen-- fell tonight.*

*Lord, cried out the idols, Don't let us be broken
Only we can convert the infidel tonight.*

*Mughal ceilings, let your mirrored convexities
multiply me at once under your spell tonight.*

*He's freed some fire from ice in pity for Heaven.
He's left open-- for God-- the doors of Hell tonight.*

*In the heart's veined temple, all statues have been smashed
No priest in saffron's left to toll its knell tonight*

*God, limit these punishments, there's still Judgment Day--
I'm a mere sinner, I'm no infidel tonight.*

*Executioners near the woman at the window.
Damn you, Elijah, I'll bless Jezebel tonight.*

*The hunt is over, and I hear the Call to Prayer
fade into that of the wounded gazelle tonight.*

*My rivals for your love-- you've invited them all?
This is mere insult, this is no farewell tonight.*

*And I, Shahid, only am escaped to tell thee--
God sobs in my arms. Call me Ishmael tonight.”*

Terza Rima

by Mars

Terza rima is another type of structured Italian poetry, invented in the late 13th century by Dante. It is made up linked tercets; that is, like a Spenserian sonnet, rhymes from the previous stanza provide the rhymes for the next.
a-b-a b-c-b c-d-c d-e-d e-f-e...

There is no limit on the number of lines, but it usually ends in a couplet (so this one could end e-f-e g-g). And, when one of these poems has three tercets and a couplet ending, they are called terza rima sonnets!

One of the amazing things about poetry is how many different ways you can do it. Besides these

structures, and about a gazillion others, you can invent your own structure or use free verse, whatever works best for your poem. Hopefully, now that you know some of the most commonly used poetic forms, you'll have some ideas for writing a new one. So dip the quill and start the creative juices flowing!