



At the end of the article on the nonet, I just started playing with rhyme and so now is a good time to address that issue. You see, to become a poet, you must learn how to use the tools of the trade. Let's start with the basic nails, nuts and bolts...

### *Rhyme*

When I referred to rhyme as nails, nuts, and bolts, I did so for a reason -- simply because it helps hold a poem together. Many poems have a rhyme scheme -- a pattern in which sounds echo each other throughout the lines. There are many ways to achieve this echo:

- **Perfect Rhymes:** These are also known as full or true rhymes. Two words that rhyme perfectly will end with identical sounds, such as air and hare, sing and bring, love and shove. For example, I am using perfect rhyme when I write:

What enchantment April brings  
When the robin builds his nest and sings.

It is the most basic form of rhyming and it can be used not only with short, one-syllabled words, but with longer words as well. A double rhyme occurs when 2 syllables of a word rhyme perfectly like:

ending and bending  
crying and sighing  
lover and hover.

Do you want to make three syllables rhyme perfectly? No problem, just use a triple rhyme with words like:

flowery and showery  
bundling and trundling  
beckoning and reckoning.

You get the idea. Often in poetry, you will find the rhyme at the end of the line. This is called, naturally enough, an end rhyme. Take, for instance, this simple example from a nursery rhyme:

Bye, baby bunting,  
Father's gone a-hunting,  
To get a little rabbit skin  
To wrap the baby bunting in.

While the conventional end rhyme is neat and effective, it is sometimes useful to place your rhymes within the line. This is called an internal rhyme. If I were to write: "I wait; the sun's light might yet touch my cheek," the rhyme obviously falls within the line rather than at the end.

Perfect rhyme (whether at the end of a line or within it) is the easiest form of rhyme, but it is not the only form available to you. Take

a look at these little gems...

• **Eye Rhymes:** These are words that look like they should rhyme but don't when spoken aloud such as:

shove and move  
daughter and laughter  
diver and river.

In Shakespeare's Sonnet 116 he describes what love is and finishes with two rhymed lines known as a couplet:

"If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved."

The words "proved" and "loved", both ending with "-oved" look like they should rhyme perfectly. Say them aloud, though, and you hear that they don't. And yet what a beautifully written couplet. Eye rhymes are subtle -- a softly-softly approach to rhyming that can be very effective.

• **Near Rhymes:** These are also called off-rhymes, slant or partial rhymes. These are rhymes that sort of echo each other, words like:

loads, lids, and lads  
groaned and ground.

There are lots of ways to come up with your own near rhymes. You can echo the sounds of a few consonants throughout a line or two, while

allowing the vowel sounds to be different. This is called **Consonance**. In “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”, Robert Frost writes:

“He **w**ill not **s**ee me **s**topping here  
to **w**atch **h**is **w**oods fill up **w**ith **s**now.”

Notice all of the “w’s” and “s’s” that form the consonance of that couplet. Try reading it aloud -- sometimes that is the best way to fully enjoy the beauty of a poem.

In the example by Robert Frost, the consonance occurs at both the beginning and the end of the words. When you repeat a consonant sound only at the beginning of the words, this is known as **Alliteration**. To write “**s**lowly, **s**lyly, **s**lithering by” is to use an alliterative “sl” sound to describe the movement of a snake.

But, you may ask, what about echoing vowel sounds? Can they be used to create near rhymes within poetry? Absolutely. To repeat vowel sounds with differing consonants is known as **Assonance**. Take the rhyming nonet from the last chapter:

There is nothing more serene than bees  
Humming in the sun-bathed flowers,  
Or a child who’s fast asleep  
Or the pale-rose hours  
Of dawn when you see  
The world becalmed  
And breathing  
Low and  
Deep.

Here we find assonance or echoed vowel sounds in the following word groups:

Serene/ bees/ asleep/ see/ breathing/ deep

Dawn/ becalmed

Humming/ sun

Rose/ low

They create a beautiful echo, not only in the obvious places -- the end of lines 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9, but throughout the poem as well.

As you can see, rhyme is a diverse and varied thing. Not only are there different types of rhymes, but they can be used in different places throughout your poetry. The benefit of all this is that it keeps your poetry fresh and interesting instead of falling into a predictable pattern of relying solely on perfect end rhymes.

We will begin putting this into use when we look at our next style of poetry, the Than-bauk.