



The limerick is a poem named after a county and a city in the Republic of Ireland. I have a theory (completely unproven, mind you) that the humour and occasional bawdiness of this poem was originally fuelled by copious amounts of the local beer. But I digress. To

get back to business: the limerick has 5 anapestic lines with this structure:

<u>Meter</u>	<u>Rhyme</u>
Line 1: anapestic trimeter or 3 anapestic feet -- UU/ UU/ UU/	a
Line 2: anapestic trimeter or 3 anapestic feet -- UU/ UU/ UU/	a
Line 3: anapestic dimeter or 2 anapestic feet -- UU/ UU/	b
Line 4: anapestic dimeter or 2 anapestic feet -- UU/ UU/	b
Line 5: anapestic trimeter or 3 anapestic feet -- UU/ UU/ UU/	a

Let's see this in action...

One young man who was really quite dim
 Asked an heiress if she'd marry him.
 Hence replied the young lass,
 Wanting diamonds, not glass,
 "You are cute, but the chances are slim."

A young girl once asked her big sister
A question she voiced in a whisper--
 For she still couldn't see
 Why the birds and the bees
Would make William Sparks want to kiss her.

Mind you, this pat metrical scheme doesn't take into account that age-old opening for a limerick:

 There once was a man from Nantucket
 U / U U / U U / U

(one iambic foot)(two anapestic feet)(and an extra unaccented syllable)

So can the meter vary? Of course, and mine frequently does. In fact, when I give myself the freedom to use different rhythms, my limericks are better. Here are my own attempts:

Once in a still, black lagoon,
There emerged by the light of the moon
A monster with scales,
Webbed feet and a tail
Who caused his young victims to swoon.

There once was a lovely young dame
Who dreamt she'd one day find fame.
 When involved in a scandal,
 She just couldn't handle
That fact that all now knew her name.

There once was a fierce crocodile
Terrorising the banks of the Nile.
 Till the Pharaoh, quite fraught,
 Had the crocodile caught
And removed all the teeth from his smile.

A mountain man of advanced years
Said "I'm lonely. The reason is clear:
 With my nits and my bugs
 My fleas and ticks -- ugh,
Even the bears won't come near.

Once a young man in a zoo
Climbed in with a lion or two.
 The beasts dined with vim
 On sirloin of Tim,
Leaving nothing behind but his shoe.

Now try your hand at writing limericks. Oh, and while there are many amusing rhymes for "Nantucket," try to keep it clean.