2.1 The Definition of Poetry

Poetry is a comprehensive term which can be taken to cover any kind of metrical composition. However, it is usually employed with reservations, and often in contradiction to verse. The implications are that poetry is a superior form of creation; not necessarily, therefore, more serious.

Poetry is the term for the many literary forms through which man has given rhythmic expression to his most imaginative and intense perceptions of himself and universe. From the Greek poiein, meaning “to make,” poetry names writing that gives concentrated imaginative utterance to experience, in words so chosen and arranged that they create an intense emotional response, through the union of theme, language, sound, and rhythm. Poetry is older than history the earliest expression of primitive peoples from tribal ceremonies, long before the written word. Poetry was first associated with music and the dance, and early peoples used poetry to chronicle great events in their history. It is both the most elemental form of human communication and the most sophisticated and subtle.

Despite its folk origins and its attempts to employ the language of common men, poetry is always artificial, consciously made. It also is always rhythmic, although the kinds of rhythm it uses vary from language to language, culture to culture, and age to age. Its subjects and tones are seemingly limitless, and its meaning is as much a function of how something is said as what is said.
Poetry attempts to express incommunicable aspects of experience through analogy and metaphor. Ultimately, every metaphor is a little poem, a device for communicating a perception and longer poems become rhythmical arrangements of metaphors in conscious designs.

Poetry differs from prose in several significant respects. Both may employ the same subjects matter and attempt to evoke the same emotions, but poetry usually is more intense, less direct, more suggestive and ambiguous. Both poetry and prose have rhythm, but the rhythm in poetry is more marked and regular. The language of poetry is essentially imagery, and most good poems are, on one level, structures of images.

Attempts to define poetry have been numerous but incomplete. William Wordsworth called poetry “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility”. Edgar Allan Poe defined it as “the rhythmical creation of beauty”. Edwin Arlington Robinson got at a part of its essence in saying that “poetry is language that tells us, through a more or less emotional reaction, something that can not be said”.

Poetry and poem describe a wide variety of spoken and written forms, styles, and patterns, and also a wide variety of subjects. Because of the variety, it is not possible to make a single, comprehensive definition. The origin of the word is the Greek word *poiema*; that is, “something made or fashioned [in words]” a meaning that applies to both poetry and to poems. Naturally, a poet was, and is, a person who writes or speaks poems. Rather than trying to understand poetry by defining it, the best way to understand it is to read it, learn it, experience it, and
enjoy it. As the readers understand of poetry deepens, they will develop their own ideas and definitions.

The readers may have found from their reading of poetry in their own language that they can often enjoy a poem without fully understanding its meaning. It is possible to pay more attention on to the way a poet says something rather than to what he actually has to say. Enjoymnt, however, must not be confused with appreciation. It is one thing to gain pleasure from a poem and quite another to be able to say why they liked it. Before the readers can say why they like a poem, it is first necessary to understand its meaning well. Reading a poem is not from every line, but from every sentence.

To understand a poem the readers must read it carefully and should observe three important rules:

1. Do not read lazily so that the readers misread the poem altogether.
2. Always look for a simple explanation, and do not be afraid to express it.
3. As far as the readers can, avoid putting their own ideas and feelings into the poem. Examine closely what the poet has actually written.

2.2 The Meaning of Poetry

The meaning of poetry can be found after find three kinds of meaning, those are General Meaning, Detailed Meaning, and Intention.

General meaning is whole meaning from the first line to the last line. It should be written simply in one, or at the most two sentences. It should be based
on a reading of the whole poem. The title of poem often gives some indication of its general meaning but it is not always true.

Detailed meaning is a meaning of every line and stanza from a poem. Detailed meaning can be written as a continuous paragraph, but it must be taken every care to be accurate and can be written rightly in simple sentences. Prose style must be paid special attention. Detailed meaning can not be expressed clumsily. It is started by writing a list of each sentence of which begins with ‘In the first stanza…’, ‘In the second stanza…’, etcetera. It shows about how a poet begins, how he develops his theme and then how he concludes it. The way to find the detailed meaning from a poem that is not divided into stanzas by making some rough attempt to divide the lines into fairly self contained groups.

Intention is certain feelings of the readers when reading a poem. A poem conveys an experience or attempts to arouse certain feelings of the readers. After reading the whole poem and then write the general meaning and the detailed meaning, so next step is deciding what feelings the poet is trying to arouse in the readers. A poem may affect different people in a great variety of ways and it is often impossible to define a poet’s true intentions, however, the most important thing is to understand and explain a poet’s purpose to be. Just as it is impossible to give the meaning of a poem without reading it carefully, it is impossible to appreciate the poem if unable to define the poet’s intentions.
2.3 The Structural Devices of Poetry

There are three structural devices of poetry: Contrast, Illustration, and Repetition. Structural devices indicate the way of the whole poem has been built and become apparent as soon as the meaning of the poem has been found. Contrast is a structure occurs when there are two completely opposite picture side by side. It is one of the most common of all structural devices. Sometimes the contrast is immediately obvious and sometimes implied. Illustration is a structure which usually takes the form of a vivid picture by which a poet may make an idea clear. Repetition is a structure occurs repeat single lines or whole stanzas at intervals to emphasize a particular idea. Repetition is to be found in poetry which is aiming at special musical effects or when a poet wants to pay very close attention to something.

2.4 The Sense Devices of Poetry

There are three sense devices of poetry: Simile, Metaphor, and Personification. Simile and metaphor are very special devices indeed. Their particular effect lies in the way apparently unrelated objects or ideas are brought together. A poet often compels to fix attention on one object while comparing it with another. It may be said that the quality of a poet often depends on his ability to bring together objects and ideas which are unconnected.

Simile is a direct comparison and can be recognized by the use of words ‘like’ and ‘as’. Metaphor is rather like a simile except that the comparison is not direct but implied: the words ‘like’ and ‘as’ are not used. The poet does not say
that one object is like another, he says it is another. Personification is a sense device occurs when inanimate objects are given a human form, or when they are made to speak.

2.5 The Sound Devices of Poetry

There are five sound devices of poetry: Alliteration, Onomatopoeia, Rhyme, Assonance, and Rhythm. All of them add considerably to the musical quality a poem has when it is read aloud. Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound at frequent intervals. Onomatopoeia is a sound occurs in words which imitate sounds and thus suggest the object described. Rhyme is sound repetition occurs at line endings in poetry and consists of words which have the same sound; the letters preceding the vowel, must, however, be unlike in sound. Assonance is an imperfect rhymes. It occurs when a poet introduces imperfect rhymes. It is often employed deliberately to avoid the jingling sound of a too insistent rhyme pattern. Rhythm is a pattern of sounds which a poet imposes on the language he uses. It is the most striking of all sound devices. When a poem is read aloud, it is nearly always possible to notice that the sounds used follow a definite pattern and are meant to appeal to the ear. It has much in common with music. A poem may be reduced to a meaningless jingle if the sound does not closely match the sense. The rhythm of a poem must always help to convey the poet’s intention and give some indication of his mood.
2.6 The Types of Poetry

There are five types of poetry: Descriptive, Reflective, Narrative, Lyric, and Sonnet. Descriptive is poems which describe people or experiences, scenes or objects. Reflective is thoughtful poems often containing a great deal of description which the poet comments on or from which he draws conclusions. Sometimes these conclusions are directly stated, at other times implied. Narrative is poems which tell a story. It tends to be longer than other types of poetry but it is comparatively easy to recognize the poet’s intention. Lyric is a short poem like a song which is usually the expression of a mood or feeling. Sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines which follows a very strict rhyme pattern. It is usually divided into two parts: the ‘octave’ (the first eight lines), and the ‘sestet’ (the last six lines). The octave and sestet are separated by a break in thought: a general statement made in the octave is illustrated or amplified in the sestet. Sonnets tend to be difficult because a great deal of meaning is often conveyed in a few lines.

There are three main types of Sonnet: the Petrarchan, the Shakespearean and the Miltonic.

a. The Petrarchan Sonnet

This is the strictest of the three types since only two rhymes are permitted in the octave and not more than three in the sestet. The octave is rhymed a-b-b-a-b-b-a and the sestet c-d-e-c-d-e (if three rhymes are used) and c-d-c-d-c-d (if two rhymes are used).
b. The Shakespearean Sonnet

Though this type of sonnet is also divided into octave and sestet, it has a much simpler rhyme pattern. It is really a poem consisting of three stanzas each of four lines in length (these are called ‘quatrains’). The sonnet ends with the rhyming lines, called ‘a rhyming couplet’. The pattern as follows: a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-e-f-e-f-g-g.

c. The Miltonic Sonnet

This has the same rhyme scheme as the Petrarchan sonnet but differs in one important respect: there is no break in thought between the octave and sestet.