

William Shakespeare Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date. 4
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed. 8
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st. 12
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Iamb: xX

Pentameter (metre of five)

x X / x X / x X / x X / x X

In practice:

x X x X x X x X x X

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

x X x X x x X X x X

Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

(Note the variation)

Blank Verse: Iambic pentameter without rhyme. Here we have a scene from Macbeth.

MALCOLM Be not offended.

I speak not as in absolute fear of you.

I think our country sinks beneath the yoke.

It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash 50

Is added to her wounds. I think withal

There would be hands uplifted in my right;

And here from gracious England have I offer

Of goodly thousands. But, for all this,

When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head 55

Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country

Shall have more vices than it had before,

More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,

By him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF What should he be? 60

MALCOLM

It is myself I mean, in whom I know

All the particulars of vice so grafted

That, when they shall be opened, black Macbeth

Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state

Esteem him as a lamb, being compared 65

With my confineless harms.

Now look what happens when we cut the lines in two:

cut by phrase

~I speak not as in absolute
fear of you.

I think our country sinks
beneath the yoke.

It weeps, it bleeds,
and each new day a gash

Is added to her wounds.
I think withal

There would be hands
uplifted in my right;

And here from gracious
England have I offer

Of goodly thousands.
But, for all this,

When I shall tread
upon the tyrant's head

Or wear it on my sword,
yet my poor country

Shall have more vices
than it had before,

More suffer, and more
sundry ways than ever,

By him that shall succeed.
~What should he be?

cut by motion

I speak not as
in absolute fear of you.

I think our country
sinks beneath the yoke.

It weeps, it bleeds, and each new
day a gash

Is added to her
wounds. I think withal

There would be
hands uplifted in my right;

And here from gracious
England have I offer

Of goodly thousands. But,
for all this,

When I shall tread upon
the tyrant's head

Or wear it on my sword, yet
my poor country

Shall have more
vices than it had before,

More suffer, and more sundry
ways than ever,

By him that shall succeed. What
should he be.

Now, look again:

I speak not as
in absolute
fear of you.

Shall have more
vices than it had
before,

I think our
country sinks beneath
the yoke.

More suffer, and more
sundry ways than
ever,

It weeps, it
bleeds, and each new
day a gash

By him that shall
succeed. What should he
be.

Is added to
her wounds. I think
withal

There would be
hands uplifted
in my right;

And here from
gracious England have
I offer

Of goodly thousands.
But,
for all this,

When I shall
tread upon the tyrant's
head

Or wear it on my
sword, yet my
poor country

Now, Compare

William Carlos Williams

LANDSCAPE WITH THE FALL OF ICARUS

According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring

a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry

of the year was
awake tingling
near

the edge of the sea
concerned
with itself

sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings' wax

unsignificantly
off the coast
there was

a splash quite unnoticed
this was
Icarus drowning



and compare:

that was shaped
as this thing is shaped?
while our eyes fill
with tears.
Of love, abiding love
it will be telling
though too weak a wash of crimson
colors it
to make it wholly credible.
There is something
something urgent
I have to say to you
and you alone
but it must wait
while I drink in
the joy of your approach,
perhaps for the last time.

Now look why practice with Cyghanedd is useful:

There is something
something urgent
I have to say to you
and to your face
but it must wait
while I drink in
the pace of your approach,
perhaps for the last time.

We're anchoring pace with face now. Now, look again:

There is something
something urgent
I have to say to you
not to your back
but it must wait
while I drink in
the pace of your approach,
perhaps for the last time.

and compare

There is something
something urgent
I have to say to you
not to your back
but it must wait
while I drink in
the fact of your approach,
perhaps for the last time.

R makes a similar pattern. If you change a sound, you have to change its twin, as we saw above with “face” and “pace” and “back” and “fact”.