

Discussion Problem for Metrical Variation

A. Lines by Shelley

The following lines are from works of Shelley. Each line contains one or more stressed syllables in W position (underlined). For each such syllable, explain why it is permitted to occupy W. Then determine if the line would have been metrical for Shakespeare and for Pope.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | one too like me: <u>tameless</u> and swift and proud | Ode West Wind 4.14 |
| 2 | Meanwhile the sun <u>paused</u> ere it should alight | JM 53 |
| 3 | Down the <u>steep</u> West into a wondrous hue | JM 73 |
| 4 | And lofty hopes of <u>divine</u> liberty | Al. 159 |
| 5 | This day had been <u>cheerful</u> but cold, and now | JM 34 |
| 6 | His sad <u>meek</u> face and eyes <u>lustrous</u> and glazed | JM 285 |
| 7 | Of starry ice the grey <u>grass</u> and bare boughs | Al. 10 |
| 8 | With doubtful smile <u>mocking</u> its own <u>strange</u> charms | Al. 295 |
| 9 | The lone <u>couch</u> of his everlasting sleep: | Al. 57 |
| 10 | A schemer subtle <u>beyond</u> all belief | Merc. 2.4 |
| 11 | Do the <u>troops</u> mutiny? — <u>decimate</u> some regiments? | Oed. Tyrr. 1.103 |
| 12 | Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee <u>bustling</u> | Endym. 450 |

B. A poem of Wyatt

Consider the lines marked with ! in the margin. Why are they metrically unusual?

Original spelling

He is not ded that somtyme hath a fall,
The sonne retorneth that was under the clowd, !
And when fortune hath spitt oute all her gall, !
I trust good luck to me shalbe allowd.
For I have sene a shipp into haven fall !
After the storme hath broke boeth mast and shrowd,
And eke the willowe that stoppeth with the wynde !
Doeth ryse again and greater wode doeth bynd.

Modern English spelling

He is not dead that sometime hath a fall,
The sun returneth that was under the cloud,
And when fortune hath spit out all her gall,
I trust good luck to me shall be allowed.
For I have seen a ship into heaven fall
After the storm hath broke both mast and shroud°,
And eke the willow that stoppeth° with the wind
Doth rise again and greater wood doth bind°.

shroud: sail

stoppeth: stoops

greater wood doth bind: ties itself around trees that are larger and stronger