

# Repetition

Repetition takes many forms in poetry. Principally, poetry in its roots as song, incorporated repetition as a means of committing the song to memory. It was an easily designed method for the oral transmission of experience to others and through time and space. Imagine ancient man sitting around a communal fire or some other such collecting point, reciting history and lessons and religion through the poetry of song. Repetition was and remains an aid to this.

It can be seen in repeating sounds, words, groups of words, metaphors, other poetic devices, structure, rhythms, punctuation and any combination of these.

It is, perhaps, the most often relied on tool by the poet to create a sense of emphasis. The reader may find themselves connecting directly to the poem as a result of repetition. But repetition can also be used to indicate and reinforce shifts within a poem. The key word to associate with repetition is **congruency**. Just as in the study of Geometry, systems (in this case poetic themes or meanings) that are in congruence have an aesthetically pleasing and often memorable form. And, as also in Geometry, the compared forms are unified and connected through their congruence. They are unique and separate when isolated, not identical, but the congruence allows for us to connect the systems as intertwined and maybe even symbiotic systems.

For example, in the poem “Peach Tree Soft and Tender” the repetition of the final phrase in each stanza “She well befits...” is actually promoting a transformation or turning of the central subject. As the bride in the poem moves from position of present and future promise in her position as the woman of a household.

## “Peach Tree Soft and Tender”

Peach tree soft and tender,  
how your blossoms glow!  
The bride is going to her home,  
she well befits this house.

Peach tree soft and tender,  
plump, the ripening fruit.  
The bride is going to her home,  
she well befits this house.

Peach tree soft and tender,  
its leaves spread thick and full.  
The bride is going to her home,  
she well befits these folk.



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