



# Elements of Poetry II

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# Terms:

## Simile:

making a comparison of two things using the words “like” or “as.”

*My wife's coffee is like a punch in the gut.*



## Metaphor:

making a more direct comparison of two things without using the words “like” or “as.”

*My wife's coffee is a punch in the gut.*



## **Symbols:**

pervasive and large metaphors that often relate to or reveal a poem's *theme*.

## **Conventional Symbols:**

symbols that are widely understood by and accepted by most people.

*water = fertility*

*serpents = evil*

*rain = melancholy*

*storms = destruction*

## Cliché:

an expression, image, or idea that has become tired and trite from overuse, its freshness and clarity having worn off.

*a broken heart*

*love is blind*

*a hollow soul*

*one true love*

*a weary heart*

*sands of time*

*baited breath*

*a broken heart*

*baptism by fire*

*rise from the ashes*

“Make It New” -- find *new* ways to express notions that are common in writing.

*Remember: if you've heard it before, then your readers have too.*

## Personification:

when human characteristics are given to non-human things.

*In "Mirror" by Sylvia Plath, for example, a mirror is given human abilities and attributes.*

*I am silver and exact.*

*I have no preconceptions.*

*Whatever I see I swallow immediately*

*Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.*

*I am not cruel, only truthful...*

## **Allusion:**

a reference to art, music, literature, mythology, history, or popular culture - allusions can help further exemplify and reveal a poem's theme without too much added narrative.

*I doubt if Phaethon feared more - that time  
he dropped the sun-reins of his father's chariot  
and burned the streak of sky we see today -*

*or if poor Icarus did - feeling his sides  
unfeathering as the wax began to melt,  
his father shouting: "Wrong, your course is wrong"*

Dante's *Inferno* (Canto XVII: 106-111).

**Meter:**

rhythm that has been measured -- the *beats* in lines of poetry.

**Denotation:**

the exact, *dictionary* meanings of words.

*The word "bird" denotes a small, winged creature.*

**Connotation:**

associations that are related to certain words.

*The word "bird" connotes freedom, flight, air, etc.*

*fin*