

# Creative writing competition



Sonnets

Villanelles

Haiku

Rondeaux Redoublés

Limericks

Free/Blank verse 

### **A hymn, like John Newton's Amazing Grace:**

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.

### **An Ode:**

Unconstrained by fixed stanza length, metrical scheme, or rhyme scheme. The key to success is stanza organisation and the consistency of metrical and rhyme patterns. The Pindaric Ode has a three-stanza structure repeated throughout (strophe-antistrophe-epode), with the strophe and antistrophe using identical metre and rhyme patterns. Stanzas can be as short as four lines or as long as thirty; the goal is a lyrically smooth manner focussing on content, not the structure. For the Horatian Ode you create your own stanza, meter, and rhyme pattern. You don't have to rotate between strophe-antistrophe-epode, as in the Pindaric Ode, but you must repeat the stanza structure you create for every succeeding stanza.

Make sure each line rhymes with at least one other line per stanza, and try to write a minimum of four stanzas. Short odes are exceedingly rare; the vast majority are at least five stanzas. Depending on how you rhyme, line lengths do not need to be consistent, but whatever length you choose for one stanza must be mirrored in successive stanzas.

**Or anything else you like. Just have a go.**

## “Other” poems.

This competition is not meant to limit or exclude, to make things difficult or stop you joining in.

The whole idea is for you to have a go, to share your ideas, to celebrate each other’s imagination, and explore creative writing.

If you want to write a poem in a form not covered by the other sections, then this is the category for you.

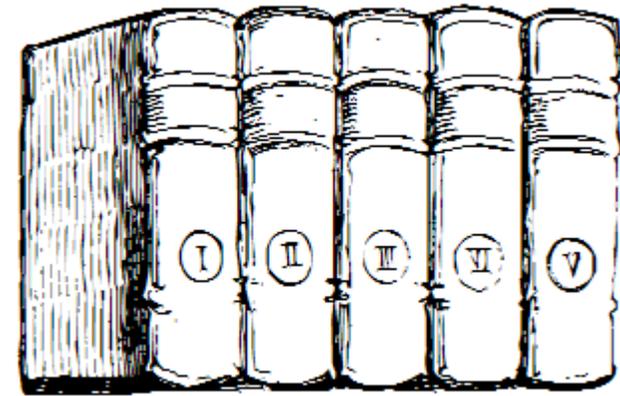
Write your poem, explain what form you have used, and send it in.

## Examples of “other” poems.

**Straightforward lyric poetry like Wordsworth’s *Daffodils*:**

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

# Section 1



# Sonnet

## Sonnet form

A sonnet is composed of 14 lines

8 lines – octave - abba abba

then

6 lines – sestet - cdecde or cddccd or cdccdc

The 9<sup>th</sup> line is the VOLTA (the turn) –  
a pivot or fulcrum in the poem, beginning a denial of the  
view proposed in the first 8 lines

Hebe's two sonnets, *Wishing Well* and *Song for Summer*,  
And Pen's *Song for Bernard*, *Incarnation* and  
*A Healthy Diet* follow two versions of the sonnet form, but  
(because they more resemble a descriptive ode than offer a  
proposition and argument as sonnets usually do) vary it, in  
not including a volta.

Rhyming patterns of the sonnets included here:

Shakespearean form (with the closing couplet):

*Wishing Well* ABABCDCDEFEGG

*As my eyes open* ABABCDCDEFEGG

(Note: in this sonnet Grace' use of almost-rhymes: B sleep, C seek, E  
feel, G see, which creates such a firm poetic integration)

*The Incarnation* ABABABCDCDCDEE

*The Turin Shroud* ABABCDCDEFEGG

(Note use of half-rhymes here)

Petrarchan form:

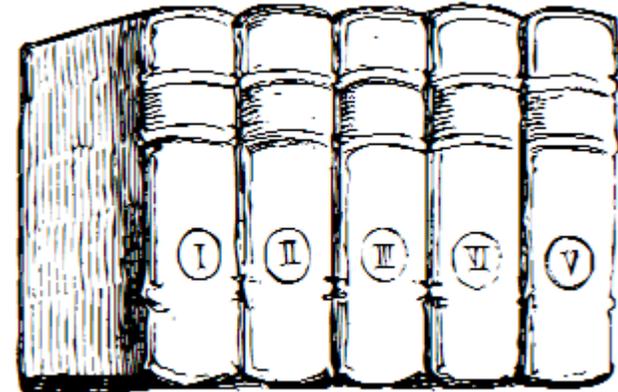
*However dear recalled* ABBAABBACDECDE

*Song for Summer* ABBAABBACDECDE

*A Healthy Diet* ABBAABBACDECDE

*Song for Bernard* ABBAACCADEDEDE

# Section 7



# Other

## **With Clay**

As my eyes open in the morning light,  
Heavy lids parting, still drowsy with sleep,  
Your slumber-soft face is first to their sight;  
And whether they laugh or whether they weep,  
Yours, always, is the countenance they seek.  
Within you glows the fire that warms my heart,  
My ballads are spun from the words you speak,  
My dances are shaped from each moving part.  
The touch of your hands tells me how to feel,  
Your gentleness shows me how to be strong;  
In nurturing me, you teach me to heal,  
And through loving, I learn how to belong.  
My opening eyes are starting to see  
That being with you, I'm becoming me.

© Grace Garner 2005

### **For TC at Freswick**

However dear recalled that smile, those eyes,  
These days that you are far away from me  
I must not squander hours in memory:  
I am mature enough. Too shrewd, too wise.  
I know successful wooing's artful guise:  
To trail and tease, all nonchalantly be  
A little distant; hard to get; not free  
Till much, much later! Flirting's harmless lies.  
But (have you noticed?), I can't hide from you  
How I have come to love you - oh, so much.  
And "treat 'em mean and keep 'em keen" apart,  
Everything in me gives away what's true;  
The sheer defenceless longing for your touch  
Here in my heart, my stolen, vanquished heart.

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### **Blank verse**

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.

(William Shakespeare)

### **Free verse**

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.  
It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
And then moves on.

(Carl Sandburg)

## **Blank Verse and Free Verse.**

These forms are not the same as each other.

Blank verse is written in regular metrical but unrhymed lines. It is most usually written in iambic pentameter (10 syllables in each line, alternating unstressed and stressed syllables).

Free verse is an open form with no rhyme or rhythm.

If your entry is in either of these forms, please specify which one.

## **Wishing Well**

Imagine what a wishing well could tell.  
The shining face of its watery bowl  
Heard the whispered prayers as the pennies fell  
And received their hopes into its dark hole.  
The sacred opening of mother earth  
Inspires the deepest secrets confidence  
An intimate reminder of our birth  
The humble pleas to divine ordinance  
Maybe of lovers' longings or their tears  
The confession of the soul's inmost cry  
Self-conscious dreams among admitted fears  
The well in her wisdom looks to the sky.  
Imagine the wishes this well could share  
Yet I think your secrets would be safe there.

# Section 6

## A Healthy Diet

All that nourishes me is not just food.  
Music does too, and fire and candlelight:  
the spangling of frosty stars winter white  
against the dark. The slender sapling stood  
in full path of day's first golden sun-flood.  
The church tower circled by starling flight;  
vixen, poised, half-turned, holding me in sight:  
soul-hunger come to rock and water, wood,  
sharp-smelling leaf, fur, to be satisfied,  
intoxicated, *fed* on wilderness.  
Give me vitamin, protein, mineral,  
grains, fruits – and free from noxious pesticide –  
But for my spirit's health, earth's loveliness,  
clear air, silken dust, must be mine as well.

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**Blank/Free**  
**verse**

## **The Christ**

Sometimes I feel that I don't know you well;  
You often feel so very far away.  
Though secrets are easy enough to tell  
I then at times struggle with what you say.  
Really it ought to be simple enough  
But then you did come a long time ago  
So though I know you've had your turn at stuff  
Crossing the gap can feel too far to go.  
And yet I can't seem to leave you for long.  
I always seem to find my way to you.  
Despite myself, I know where I belong.  
I guess the World can't help but know what's true.  
Steady, despite corruption, greed and dross,  
The world revolves around the stable cross.

## Song for Bernard

*Why* do I love you? Heavens, let me see...  
It would be simpler far to tell you *how* –  
Like Barrett Browning then, pour lists out now  
Of all you mean and all you are to me.  
But *why* is far more complex and would be  
Begun with mention of your crazy eyes –  
Now furious, now amorous, now wise,  
Now kind – discerning far too much of me.  
And then I love – but didn't always know –  
Your deep capacity for tenderness.  
I love your storm and fire (it scares me, though),  
The biting scorn, then startling gentleness;  
Your courage, love of truth; and being so  
Odd. Far too dear, too wild, to love you less.

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There was a young woman of Ryde  
Who ate some green apples and died.  
The apples fermented  
Inside the lamented,  
And made cider inside her inside.

(Anon)

A fly and a flea in a flue  
Were imprisoned, so what could they do?  
Said the fly, "Let us flee!"  
"Let us fly!" said the flea.  
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

(Ogden Nash)

There were three little birds in a wood  
Who always sang hymns when they could.  
What the words were about  
You could never make out,  
But you felt it was doing them good.

(Author unknown)

## **Limerick**

A well-known form of comic poem which appeared in England in the 18th century.

Five lines with a strict format of AABBA.

The metre is anapaests — that is two short syllables followed by a long one (or two unstressed followed by a stressed one), as in “ta-ta TUM”.

God's sonnet: He has trouble with His rhyme scheme and His scansion.. It's called

## **The Incarnation**

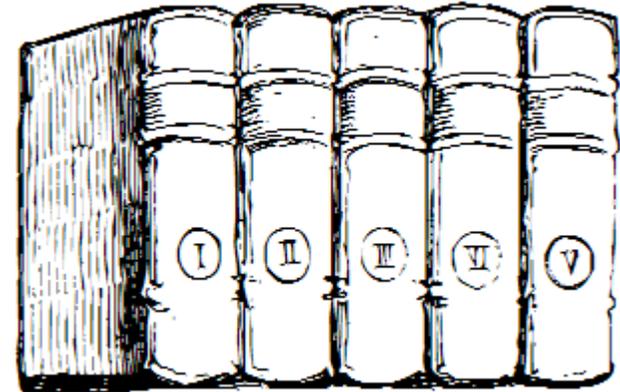
I save souls. From the old and wrinkly  
(wrinkly has three syllables, not two;  
it's how you say it): to the crinkly  
from being just born and extremely new:  
I save them from being intrinsically  
(Recall! How you say it is up to you!)  
stuffed. Lovingly I catch them when they slip.  
I know how it is (I do, I was there):  
I saw the shirts tea-stained 'twixt cup and lip.  
Knowing the fates never have played it fair  
and laugh when the tricky dance makes them trip,  
I choose to match my faultless step with their  
stumbling. Unobtrusive befriending,  
until the dance and the journey's ending.

## **Song for Summer**

O fresh-faced Summer, her cheeks like peaches  
Her hair like spun gold and eyes azure blue  
She walks in the morning gathering dew  
And at night she builds fires on the beaches.  
The sparks fly into the starry reaches  
And she sings and sleeps 'til morning is new  
Melon for breakfast and lemon balm brew  
And swimming the surf shingled breaches.  
O lazy laugh Summer walks on bare feet  
Her freckling nose and shoulders are brown  
Her white cotton dresses bright in the sun.  
Ah! Summer's scent lingers, perfuming sweet  
The year's golden balm surrenders her crown  
For auburn-haired Autumn's season has come.

© Hebe Wilcock 2006

# **Section 5**



# **Limerick**

To own true beauty  
Cultivate it from within  
Beauty shines through skin

Dark nights hold secrets  
That the daylight cannot know  
But the secrets glow

Money shows the truth  
The truth of where the heart flows  
Look at what it chose

Your heart knows the beat  
Inside dance of your body  
Rhythm on two feet

## **The Turin Shroud**

Is this the face of God? Whether or nay  
Our Jesus' resurrection glory burned  
The shroud, or some unknown whose visage stays,  
How can I reconcile the horrors learned –  
The screaming pain of thrashing ruptured welts  
Again, again, a flagrant cruelty;  
Needles snagging scalp nerves, stakes through flesh:  
Vile savagery beyond apology?  
The wonder is this gently peaceful face;  
Bloodied, swollen, yet as were's woes forgot  
And we, accountable, behold a grace,  
Believe – “Surely this was the Son of God”.  
Perhaps it's true, our whispered, hopeful dare;  
Remembrance is enough to find him there.

Serenity is  
Not to abandon feelings  
It is to see them

God hides in spaces  
Have you looked in emptiness?  
It is full of God

Remedy for day  
The night eases the senses  
Blessing you with sleep

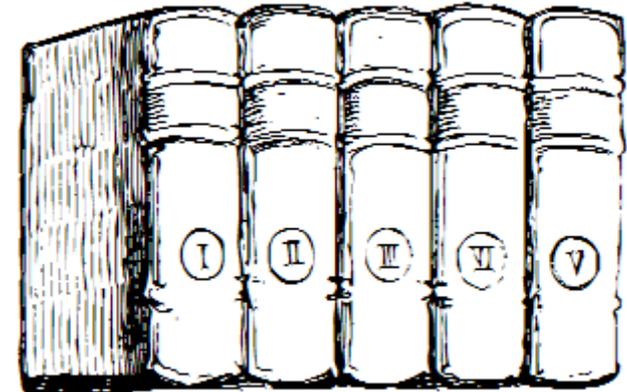
An armful of fur  
He is so warm and alive  
In perfect cat-ness

## Haiku

A traditional Japanese form of poetry:

A 3-phase 17-syllable verse form,  
arranged in a 5-7-5 pattern.

# Section 2



# Villanelle

**Villanelles** are structured as follows:

- 5 3-line stanzas (tercets, not 'aaa bbb' triplets) then
- 1 4-line stanza concluding

The 1<sup>st</sup> line of the 1<sup>st</sup> stanza is used as the refrain for stanzas 2 & 4 and as the penultimate line in the 6<sup>th</sup> stanza.

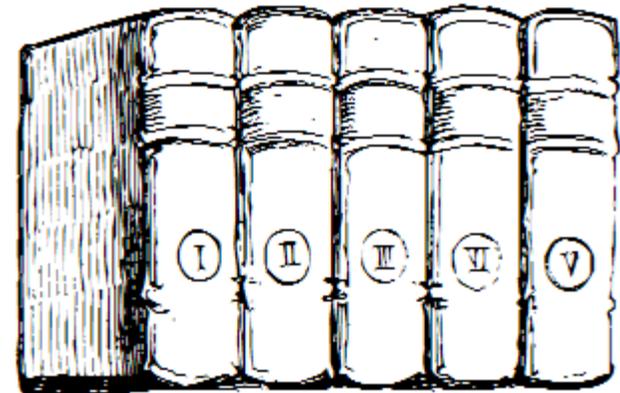
The last line of the 1<sup>st</sup> stanza is used as the last line of stanzas 3, 5 & 6

These 2 lines (the first and last lines of the 1<sup>st</sup> stanza) rhyme with each other (establishing the 'a' rhyme).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> line (of the 1<sup>st</sup> stanza) establishes the 'b' rhyme, which is then kept up in the 2<sup>nd</sup> line of each stanza throughout

No rules as to metre or length of measure

# Section 4



# Haiku

## **The Cathedral**

Here I am, a stranger, on familiar ground,  
Arriving in the company of pilgrims past.  
Voices of lost centuries through the years resound.  
In this courtyard of hallows I am lost and found,  
In the shelter of shadows so long ago cast;  
Here I am, a stranger, on familiar ground.

Outside these walls, the thunder roars, and hard rains pound,  
But though the sky is sundered by the stormy blast,  
Voices of lost centuries through the years resound.  
About this mystery the web of life is wound,  
The place where beasts and angels hold each other fast -  
Here I am, a stranger, on familiar ground.

My song joins the echoes in holy, living sound.  
Solo becomes counterpoint in a chorus vast.  
Voices of lost centuries through the years resound.  
The path is trod deep on the wide earth's round.  
I am neither alone, nor the first, nor the last.  
Here I am, a stranger, on familiar ground.  
Voices of lost centuries through the years resound.

## Inspiration

This is the one I can't afford to lose  
A sorry mess without her I would make  
I chase down avenues to catch my muse.

She takes me unawares in shopping queues  
And brings a fire impossible to fake  
This is the one I can't afford to lose.

She pools on coloured, sun-drenched, wooden pews,  
She lingers long by dappled dimpling lakes  
I chase down avenues to catch my muse.

But, boy, does she just know how to confuse  
That blinding search can make an artist break  
This is the one I can't afford to lose.

So when I doubt the pathways that I choose  
I look for her to tell me which to take;  
I chase down avenues to catch my muse.

And when I think she just gives me the blues  
I remember how she makes me feel awake  
This is the one I can't afford to lose  
I chase down avenues to catch my muse.

## Rondeau redoublé – An Anecdote Unwanted

Please don't tell us your dream.  
As you bend my poor ear,  
I'm trying not to scream.  
Nobody wants to hear!

I wonder why I'm here,  
Watching you fondly beam.  
We could be stuck here all year –  
Please don't tell us your dream.

As you warm to your theme,  
You then shift down a gear,  
Detailing every scheme  
As you bend my poor ear.

Please let the end be near!  
I see how your eyes gleam  
While mine threaten a tear;  
I'm trying not to scream.

Did this, at some point, seem  
Relevant – the point clear?  
This is a mutant meme  
Nobody wants to hear.  
Please don't tell.

## Rondeau Redoublé

Permits the use of only two rhymes.  
Repeats complete lines throughout.  
Consists of five stanzas of four lines each  
except for the final fifth stanza,  
which has five lines,  
ending with a repeated half-line  
taken from the first line of the poem.  
The key to this style of poetry  
is the construction of the first stanza,  
with the four lines appearing, in turn,  
as the final lines of the following four verses.

## Fear of flying/falling

I can't distinguish daydazzle from night:  
If this is ecstasy that feels like pain;  
Whether I thrill with fear or delight.

My sense is swamped with glory far too bright,  
The "love you / miss you" driving me insane.  
I can't distinguish daydazzle from night.

It's hard to know, when passion winds so tight  
Remembered kisses ravish me again,  
Whether I thrill with fear or delight.

And strive to find a balance though I might,  
To calm rampant confusion in my brain,  
I can't distinguish daydazzle from night

Or understand, when shards of sharpest white  
Pure longing my composure pierce and drain,  
Whether I thrill with fear or delight.

Propelled to this fierce, snowblind, dizzy height  
Of trembling, wire-taut joy, desire, strain  
I can't distinguish daydazzle from night,  
Whether I thrill with fear or delight.

## Sunday Afternoon

Spingle spangle lightful dust  
Beaters banish webby dens  
Tingle tangle got here fust.

Afternoon's sunshine glory hush'd  
Through rippling glass she warmly bends  
Spingle spangle lightful dust.

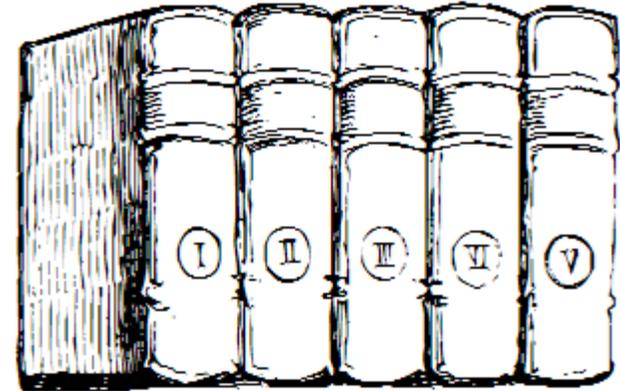
Spidr'y dancing in webly trust  
The perfect trap she walking wends  
Tingle tangle got here fust.

Beaters beat and studiously thrust  
Reproach arachnids and dusty trends  
Spingle spangle lightful dust

The corner's webly weaves are muss'd  
But as any Godly housewife kens  
Tingle tangle got here fust

And spidr'y cross darkly cuss'd  
She's got to cast her weaves amends  
Spingle spangle lightful dust  
Tingle tangle got here fust.

# Section 3



# Rondeau redoublé

## Writing a Poem – a villanelle

I can't begin to concentrate –  
And writing poems takes some sight –  
And so I over-compensate.

While I sit and contemplate  
Laboured phrases veer and fight;  
I can't begin to concentrate.

Though lines begin to congregate  
The rhymes are odd, the scansion's shite  
And so I over-compensate.

The meaning starts to complicate,  
The concept starts to lose its light.  
I can't begin to concentrate.

The poem's meant to consecrate  
But mine are grim, they smear and blight,  
And so I over-compensate.

The final throes all conflagrate  
Into a blaze of dire plight;  
I can't begin to concentrate  
And so I over-compensate.

## **Burn-out Song**

Gently, gently, keep calm – it's all OK.  
Take a deep breath, don't let it frighten you.  
Leave what you can't do for another day.

What are you scared of really, anyway?  
Make room to let a fresh perspective through.  
Gently, gently, keep calm – it's all OK.

You need to take a break? Yes? Well – you may!  
Chill out! Go shopping for an hour or two.  
Leave what you can't do for another day.

When you're too tired to think straight, or to pray,  
How likely are these terrors to be true?  
Gently, gently, keep calm – it's all OK.

Come on now. Let this tension drain away.  
There's too much here for one person to do.  
Leave what you can't do for another day.

Don't get hung up on what people might say.  
All of them hate you? Do they? Really? Who?  
Gently, gently, keep calm – it's all OK:  
Leave what you can't do for another day.

**Remember the deadline for your  
entries for the poetry  
competition is 7th July 2018.  
Please send your entries to  
Pen Wilcock  
at  
18 Beaufort Road  
St Leonards on Sea  
East Sussex TN37 6QA  
or  
[seerember@gmail.com](mailto:seerember@gmail.com)  
On Saturday 21st July  
at Pett Methodist Chapel  
we'll have a poetry reading and  
announce the winners. Time TBA**

# Competition entry form

Name

Contact



Entry fee £2.50 per poem

# Competition Entries

1. Title  
Form

2. Title  
Form

3. Title  
Form

4 Title  
Form