UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives
2.2 Introduction
2.3 Epic and Narrative Poetry
2.4 Poetry : Regional International and in Translation
2.5 Let Us Sum Up
2.6 Possible Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- describe the varieties of poetry,
- discuss the history of poetry, i.e. narrative and lyric,
- explain poetry: regional, international and in translation.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Poetry has great variety and experiments with poetic forms and technique and exploration of diverse themes continue vigorously even in this age of computers. Despite the near uniformity in life styles consequent upon what is called globalization, one individual is as different from another as she/he used to be in the days of the epic. Poetry is no different. We know that European literature begins with Homer‘s ***Iliad*** and ***Odyssey*** as our own literature begins with the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. We can therefore say that literature begins with stories in verse. Poetry is definitely not as popular now as it used to be. It may be because the poetry territory of story telling has been appropriated by prose. Be that as it may, poetry continues to change with the times. It is, in fact, quite a journey work from Homer’s ***The Iliad*** to Nicampor Parra’s ***Anti-poems***. Before attempting to write a ‘poetic piece’ we must familiarize ourselves with all these goings – on. The best place to start, perhaps, is at the beginning. So we begin with a brief note on epic poetry. Our look at the epic is purposely cursory because it is unlikely that you would be writing an epic now in these our mobile spaces.

2.3 EPIC AND NARRATIVE POETRY

An epic or a heroic poem is a long narrative poem on a great subject important to a nation or at least to a community . It is written in an elevated style and the central character or hero is a figure of national or even cosmic importance . Homer's The Iliad and Odyssey and the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf are called primary epics . The literary or 'secondary ' epics are written in imitation of the traditional form . Virgil's Latin poem Aeneid and Milton's Paradise Lost are secondary or literary epics . Dryden translated the Aenid into English and his first line is "Of arms and the man / I sing " which was used as the title of his play Arms and the Man by George Bernard Shaw . This is the range that a writer or a poet needs today . So you maynot write epics but you cannot ignore them . You may refer to W.H. Auden's ' The Shield Of Achilles ' or Navakanta Barua's ' Ravana ' as poems based on epics . The epic narrative starts in 'media res ' that is ' in the middle of the things ' at a critical point in the action . This is often followed in the modern novel and film . Another significant feature of the epics is the use of ' epic' or extended similes ', which are formal and sustained similes where the comparison moves beyond the specific point of parallel .There are very long poems in our days too , like Derek Walcott's Omeros . Ballads , some of the best of which are attributed to the fifteenth century , are verse narratives orally transmitted . These anonymous stories in song acquired their distinctive flavour by being passed down orally from generation to generation , each singer consciously or unconsciously redefining his inheritance .Most ballad singers probably were composers only by accident ;they intended to transmit what they had heard , but their memories were sometimes faulty and their imaginations active. The modifications give a ballad three noticeable qualities:

1. It is impersonal even if there is an 'I' who sings the tale he is usually characterless .

2. The ballad like the nursery rhyme is filled with repetition,

sometimes of lines , sometimes of words as you can see in Lord Randall which is mentioned below .

3. Sometimes the story is told with incremental repletion, that is, variations which advance the story.

Lord Randall

'O where have you been , lord Randall , my son ?
O where have been , my handsome young men ?
I have been to the wild wood ; mother , make my bed soon,
For I am weary with hunting , and fain would lie down !
'Who gave you your dinner , Lord Randall , my son ?
Who gave you your dinner , my handsome young man ?
'I dined with my sweetheart ; mother make my bed soon ,
For I am weary with hunting , and fain would lie down …....
……..

You will be surprised to find that this fifteenth century ballad had been turned into a twentieth century Rock Song by Bob Dylan in his 'A hard rain's gonne fall':

'O where had you been , my blue eyed son
O where had you been my darling young men ?
I had been to the depths of the deepest dark foresty …….'

Since the late eighteenth century popular ballads have been imitated by professional poets . Keat's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci ' and Coleridge's ' The Rime Of the Ancient Mariner ' are among the most significant . In both these poems, however, the narrative is often overshadowed by symbolic implications.

Narrative poetry is set in the past and is almost a matter of the past now. When we think of poetry now we are more likely to think of Wordsworth, Yeats, Neruda or Hobeb rather than the The Aenied or Beowulf. For the Greeks a lyric was a song accompanied by a lyre, but by Wordsworth 's time it had its present meaning of a poem that, neither narrative (i.e. telling a story) nor strictly dramatic (i.e. performed by actors), is an emotional or reflective soliloquy. A lyric is

set in the present catching a speaker in a moment of expression . In ‘ I wandered lonely as a cloud ‘’ , Wordsworth does narrate a happening (He wandered and came across some daffodils) and he describes a scene too (the daffodils were ‘ fluttering and dancing in the breeze “) , But the poem is about the speaker’s emotional response to the flowers he happened upon : When he recalls them his ‘ heart with pleasure fills / and dances with the daffodils’ :

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o,ver 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 .
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle in the Milky way ,
They stretched in never ending line
Along the margins of the bay .
……
……
……

The poet was wandering aimlessly and alone like a cloud when he chanced upon ‘ host of golden daffodils’ swaying in the wind by a lake . The poet’s loneliness is dispelled and he becomes part of that jocund company . It , infact becomes part of the very meaning of his life and through the ‘ inward eye ‘ of memory , he recreates the scene in a listless mood and feels animated with the same joy and fellowship again.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is an epic? What are its salient features?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Write a note on the ballad? Show how they have been exploited by later poets.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Consider ballads and epics as narrative poems .

.....

.....

.....

.....

The lyric is, infact , a blanket term for the varieties in modern poetry . A lyric exploits the 'inward eye ' , it looks within and is subjective in emphasis .

The first person singular pronoun 'I' provides the vantage , the perspective and the theme , as in Wordsworth's ' I wandered lonely as a cloud ' . In the past lyrics were songs sung to the accompaniment of a lyre . In our times it is a personnel poem and it covers the entire range from the sonnets of Shakespeare to the interior meditations of T.S. Eliot , W.H. Auden , and Seamous Heaney . When a lyric is melancholy or mournfully contemplative especially it laments a death , it may be called an elegy . Before Gray's famous elegy , the word often denoted a personal poem written in pairs of lines on any theme .If a lyric is rather long , elaborate and on a lofty theme like immortality or a hero's victory , it may be called an ode . Greek odes were choral pieces more or less hymns of praise in elaborate stanzas , but in Rome , Horace (658B.C.) applied the word to quiter pieces , usually in stanzas of four lines , celebrating love , patriotism or

simple Roman morality . Distinctions among lyrics are often vague , and one man's elegy may be another man's ode . Still when a writer uses one of these words in his title he is inviting the reader to recall the tradition in which he is working on the poets's link to tradition T.S. Eliot has said :

> *"No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the deadpoets and artists. You cannot value him alone. You must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead."*

Odes were quite popular during the Romantic period and while Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote odes on immortality and dejection respectively , a younger Romantic poet , John Keats , is remembered mainly because of his odes on various themes and concerns . His ' Ode On A Grecian Urn ' uses the urn and whatever is engraved on it as a vehicle to communicate an insight about truth and beauty . This ode ends with the following lines which have proved controversial and we find critics and readers coming out with contrary reactions to it :

Beauty is truth , truth beauty that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know .

T.S.Eliot says of these lines : "On re-reading the whole 'Ode' , this line strikes me as a serious blemish on a beautiful poem , and the reason must be either that I fail to understand it , or that it is a statement which is untrue ….. The statement of Keats seems to me meaningless : or perhaps the fact that it is grammatically meaningless conceals another meaning from me.'' We may say that the lines perhaps mean that imagination stimulated by the urn achieves a realm richer than the daily world. Keats' Odes reveal a lot more when they are studied together and we approach what may perhaps be called their central burden if we refer them to his sonnet 'Bright star':

Bright star ! would were steadfast as thou art –
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night ,
And watching , with eternal lids apart
Like nature's patient sleepless cremite
The moving waters aat their priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores
……..
……
……

In this Sonnet Keats, with his head resting on Fanny Brawnes breast is comparing and contrasting his situation with that of the star, the octave showing the star shining down on the sea and on snow covered hills, while the sestet deals with Keats himself and Fanny. He envils the star because, unlike himself, it is 'steadfast' and 'unchangeable'. He would like to be, if not as distant and completely detached as the star at least less changeable . The structural heart of the poem is the implied parallel between the 'pure and priestlike' seas and snows that the star is watching and Keats' own observation of his 'fair love's ripening breast'. The repetition of 'soft fallen mask' (L.7) and 'soft fall and swell' (L.11)clinches the parallel . The background to the poem may be the old conflict between lust and love . In a wider context , it is the conflict of 'finity' and 'flux'. Looked at this way , it gives us another vantage to look at the odes , especially ' Ode On A Grecian Urn' and 'Ode to the Nightingale' in which Keats is trying to sublimate the physical elements in his feeling for Fanny.

A sonnet is a lyric usually of fourteen lines (Shakespeare's Sonnet 99 has 15 lines while his sonnet 126 has only twelve lines or six couplets. Hopkins wrote what he called 'curtal sonnets' in only 12 lines, E.g. 'Pied Beauty'). It addresses one topic which is, conventionally, love. Often these were not isolated sonnets but were parts of 'sequences' clusters of sonnets . The lover's joy might be a staple for part of a sequence; his grief for another part; his renewed hope for

yet another . Almost overwhelmingly , sonnets were lyrics of unrequited love where the passion was in the seeking of love. For the Elizabethans, a sonnet was any short -song like poem (Italian, sonnetto, a song; from Latin sonus, a sound), but the word has come to denote a lyric of fourteen lines whose meter is prevailingly iambic pentameter. Though the poem developed in thirteenth century Italy, it was a fourteenth century Italian, Francis Petrarch, who was the chief influence on English sonneteers . A few sonnets were written in England in the middle of the sixteenth century (Tottell's Miscellany, 1557), but the great English vogue of sonneteering was delayed until the final decade of the century. Unsurprisingly, Shakespeare's sequence of 154 sonnets is a good deal richer than that of his contemporaries. He had added, among other things, the themes of friendship, honour, duty, lust.

A sonnet is always divided into two unequal parts - the octet or octave and the sestet . The octave has eight lines and the sestet six. This is the Petrarchan sonnet . The English or the Shakespearean sonnet divides into three quatrains (4*3=12) and a couplet (2 rhyming lines). There may be fourteen line poems which are not sonnets, like the following piece by Robert Lowell :

Artist's Model

"If it were done , twere well it were done quickly –
To quote a bromide , your vacillation is acne '
And we totter off the strewn stage ,
Knowing tomorrow's migraine will remind us
How drink heightened the brutal flow of elocution ……
We follow our plot obediently as actors ,
divorced from making a choice by our vocation .
'If you woke and found an egg in your shoe ,
Would you feel you 'd lost the argument ?
Its over , my clothes fly into your borrowed suitcase ,
The good day is gone , the broken champagne glass
Crashes in the ash can ……..private whims and illusions,

Too merry for our character to survive.
I come on walking offstage backwards.

It is not the number of lines, therefore, but the disparity in length between the two constitutive parts that makes a sonnet a sonnet . It is a severely restricted form but a poet can show that he is the master of his craft when he writes a sonnet. Besides, it gives another kind of freedom, like cycling down hill when the cycle pushes the pedals. The rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan (or Italian) sonnet is abbaabba, cdecde, but the sestet often has variations. In Petrarch 's sonnets and in those of many of his imitators, there is a 'turn' with the beginning of the ninth line; for example, a generalization in the octave may be illustrated by a particularization in the sestet or the other way round . Milton, in his 'On his blindness' moves from an individual human situation to a general assertion about god.

When I consider how my light is spent ,
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide ,
And that one Talent which is death to hide ,
Lodg'd with me useless , though my soul more bent
To serve there with my Maker and present
My true account lest he returning chide ,
Doth God exact day – labour , light denyed
I fondly ask ; But patience to prevent
That murmur soon replies , God doth not need
Either man's work , or his own gifts : who lest
Bear his mild yoak , they save him bets : his state is kingly.
Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'vr land and Ocean without rest :
They also serve who only stand and wait.

Sonnets are usually addressed to a 'chaste' lady who is irrevocably beyond reach and her 'chastity' is almost synonymous with cruelty. Shakespeare, on the otherhand, wrote of requited love and friendship and he has three addresses in place of the conventional one . The following piece is addressed to the 'Gentleman friend' :

SONNET LXV

Since brass , nor stone , nor earth, nor boundless sea ,
But sad mortality o'ver sways their power ,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea ,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower ?
O how shall summer's honeybreath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days
When rocks impregnable are not so stout ,
Nor gates of steel so strong , but time decays ?
O fearful meditation !where , alack ,
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid ?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back ,
Or who his spoil o'er beauty can forbid ?
O none , unless this miracle have might :
That in black ink my love may still shine bright .

Love, Shakespeare seems to say, celebrated in words, can withstand even time.

Let's now look at the first Assamese sonnet rendered in English : Prioyatomar Cithi (The Beloved's letter): by Hem Chandra Goswami

Loosening the covers off beauty's breast
At nature's private chamber I glower
In this hand ungainly as a crow's nest ,
The honey there is there's none better .
Many a verse in the poet's bower may bloom ,
and waft about on earth in the vernal breeze ,
but the songs that in your letter loom
no poetry can claim it ever sees .
Flowers blossom , wilt and fall , the turf goes dry ;
Your letter Honey , what miracle works
The first sprouts of spring witting lie '-
It never grows stale , but fresh flowers invokes ,

I sniff it and kiss it , but will never tire
Instead in my heart glows the star of desire.

(translated by Pradip Acharya)

It may be compared with the Assamese original and the nuances may be highlighted as an exercise in creative translation.

Other lyrics often have a dramatic intensity but the 'dramatic monologue' shows a character speaking out in a moment of crisis, stress, or tension in his or her own individual idiom, to an audience of silent auditors. Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess' is one of the best known dramatic monologues. It reveals the character of the Duke, the patriarch that he was, and of the times and its feudal nature. This form and technique had been exploited in Assamese poetry most significantly by Deva Kanta Barooah. The following analysis of Brownings poem should help us appreciate the dramatic monologue!

My Last Duchess

Robert Browning

That's my last duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
"Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint

"Must never hope to reproduce the faint
"Half-flush that dies along her throat": such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart how shall I say? too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men good! but thanked
Somehow I know not how as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech which I have not to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
"Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
"Or there exceed the mark" and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and make excuse,
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

This monologue is spoken in the presence of the ambassador of a foreign Count whose daughter is being sought in marriage by the widowed Duke . The basis of his character is the complacent egotism of the provincial aristocrat whose name is centuries old , who regards his wife as a dependent and her innocent gaiety and graciousness as unthinking ease and presumption to be summarily stopped . His most salient idiosyncracy is that of the connoisseurship and pride of mere possession of a masterpiece which Browning felt to be a phase of the decadent Renaissance .

There are forms , relatively rare in English poetry with more frequent and strictly patterned repetitions than a ballad . These forms are even more severely restricted than a sonnet . One of these is the **villanelle**, which is borrowed from the French , and has nineteen lines , first of which reappears as lines six twelve and eighteen and the third of which , rhyming with the first , reappears as lines nine , fifteen , and nineteen . There are but two sound endings in the entire poem as line two rhymes with lines five , eight , eleven , fourteen , and seventeen . In so strict and artificial a form it is vital that the lines reappear as naturally as possible , and yet that the reappearance in differing contexts given new depth , range , or precision to the lines involved, Dylan Thomas ‘s ‘Do not go gentle into that good night ‘ is one of the most popular poems in this form. We shall however consider a villanelle by Elizabeth Bishop, which has more flexibility :

The art of losing isn’t hard to master ;
So many things seem filled with the intent
To be lost that their loss is no disaster

Lose something everyday . Accept the fluster

Of lost door keys , the hour badly spent ,
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther , losing faster :
Places , and names , and where it was you meant
To travel . None of these will bring disaster .

I lost my mother's watch . And look! My last , or
Next to last , of three loved houses went :
The art of losing isn't hard to master .

I lost two cities , lovely ones . And vaster ,
Some realms I owned , two rivers , a continent
I miss them , but it wasn't a disaster .

Even losing you (the joking voice , gesture
I love , I Shan't have lied . Its evident
The art of losing's not too hard to master
Though it may look like (write it !)nlike disaster .

Despite the repetitions and the restraints Bishop manages to write plainly and precisely. It is impossible to separate the poem's reality as a made thing from its effect as a personal cry. In one way, it is entirely formal, preoccupied with its technical procedures, taking delight in the exigencies of rhyme, in obeying the rules of the highly constraining villanelle form.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. How would you describe a contemporary lyric?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Are sonnets lyrics ? Is a sonnet merely a fourteen line poem?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Name a very well known villanel by Dylan Thomas and add a note on the form.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

LET US KNOW



We should know that 'India' had figured as a metaphor for translation in a lecture by Susan Sontag and published in The Times Literary Supplement on June 13, 2003 and was called 'The World as India.' It is also included in 'At the Sametime, a posthumous collection of essays by Susan Sontag published in 2007.

2.4 POETRY : REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND IN TRANSLATION

We had talked about the different look a poem has on a page. But there are what they call prose poems, poems that are aspiring the conditions of prose. They look no different for they are printed as prose is sometimes even with paragraphs. But they remain poems nonetheless. Octavio Puz in Spanish, Arun Mitra in Bengali, and Sameer Tanti in Assamese have written very significant poems of this sort. Consider the following poem by Sameer Tanti in English translation :

Like an apple , a glass of wine , like secret sex urge , I had always been cancelling me out . The things so cancelled are disappearing day by day . Inside me I , and inside that a hunter , and inside that still an old fashioned hero , slandered without having wrecked shrines ,temples , mosques . Even after everything is destroyed I am looking for copper , the burnt smell of tobacco , black horses , and the mysterious woman of night . No , I will lose myself for my own opposition . It is day as it is , and on top of that eyes . Whoever will kneel down at the capital and allow someone to waste away . A certain new colour, certain fresh shapes , and new avatars sprout in places beyond my vision . It is there that trees learn to stand straight , grass grows on navals , sunshine explodes , the baby begins to babble. Like the second episode of a serial , I , too , would rather be distances once . Now which page is called life , which flesh or feelings? There unmeaning wails , bare skulls , fertile masturbation , the speed of motor bikes would soar s smoke in towns and cities . After that what ? Whose request would be impossibly successful . Like these extremists , like the unification of Germany , like Rushdie's banned book I will keep on canceling me out.

(Translated by Pradip Acharya).

This remains a poem , an excellent one at that even after translation. It is not always easy to capture the nuances in a translation . The following poem addresses the Palestinian question metaphorically and , in its seven lines , gives us the past , the present , and the future of the problem :

We housed them in prisons
For they wanted a home ,
We killed them for they wanted eternal life
Then bulldozed their prisons into fields of corn.

What's that hand sticking out from the earth ?

Other hands will sprout from it –
And tickle us to death .

Navakanta Barua (translated by Pradip Acharya)

LET US KNOW



This translation of Navakanta Barua's ''Palestine'' into English from Assamese was published in *Poetry*, Volume 190 , No 5 , September 2007 . It was founded by Hariet MONROE IN 1912 . The first Indian poet to figure in *Poetry* was Rabindranath Tagore. In its third issue, in December 1912, *Poetry* carried six of Tagore's poems from ''Gitanjali'', translated by the poet himself, with an introduction by Ezra Pound.

Let us recount below the actual process of translating a poem by Osip Mandelstam from the original in Russian to English by Clarence Brown and N.S. Merasim :

Mandelstam's poem 394 (BROWN & Merasin, 2004) in the Russian in painfully literal English is as follows :

Limping automatically (or involuntarily) on the empty earth
with(her) irregular, sweet gait,
she walks, slightly preceding
(her) quick girlfriend and the youth one year older (for younger)
than she.
The straitened freedom of (her) animating affliction
draws her (on)

And it seems that a lucid surmise
wants to linger in her gait
(the surmise) that this spring weather
is for us the feist mother (i.e. Eve) of the graves vault
and (that) this will be forever going on.

W.S. Merwin, a very significant contemporary American poet, turned it into the following remarkable English poem :

Limping like clock on her left leg ,
At the beloved gait, over the empty earth,
She keeps a little ahead of quick girl,
Her friend, and the young man almost her age
What's holding her back
Drives her on.
What she must know is coming
Drags at her foot. She must know
That under the air, their spring,
Our mother earth is ready for us
And that it will go on like this forever.

A translation alters the original because a poem has to be a poem in the target language , that is the language translated into . The translation is free because the original is only an earlier version in an alien language . Merwin has translated Mandelstam into Merwin as Mandelstam had translated Petrarch into Mandelstam or Nobakov had translated Pushkin not into literal English (as he claimed) but into Nobakov.

When a poem is transferred to another language it is the translating language which must dominate . In translating into English we must use that English which works as an instrument of poetry in our time . We have to accept the responsibility entailed in the fact that to translate is to change .

There have been numerous instances where translations had not only made the poet translated famous but had also improved upon the original . Baudelaire's translation of Edgar Allen Poe is a case in point. A still burgeoning discipline called 'Translation Studies' endeavours to analyse the politics involved in the act of translation in the post – colonial period from the vantage of structuralism and post structuralism.

There is also an interesting if eccentric tradition of poems written for the eye. The seventeenth century was relatively rich in such visual representation . George Herbert, a Metaphysical poet , wrote a number

of poems in which the shape followed the subject . The following can be read or heard as rhyming pairs of lines with varying length but only visually can the form reflect the subject :

The Altar

A broken altar Lord , thy servant reares ,
Mode of a heart , and cemented with tears ;
W hose parts are as thy hand did frame ;
No worksman's tools had touched the same .
A heart alone
Is such a stone ,
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut .
Wherefore each part
Of my heard heart
Meets in this frame
To praise thy name .
That if I chance to hold my peace
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
O let thy blessed sacrifice be mine ,
And sanctifie this A ltar to be thine.

A more common and somewhat less elaborate form of 'eye–poem' is the '***acrostic***' where the initial letters of the lines from a word that relates to amplifies, or otherwise adds to the lines themselves. In Robert Bridge's, 'Eros and Psyche', the initial letters spell out the name of the famous British composer Purell :

Pathetic strains and passionate they wove ,
Urgent ecstasies of heavenly sense ;
Responsive rivalries, that, while they strove
Combined in full harmonious response ,
Enhancing wild desire, then fell at last
Lulled in soft closes and with gay contrast
Launched forth their ' fresh unwearied excellence



Acrostic —

A poem or other piece of writing in which particular letter in each line, usually the first letters, can be read downwards to form a word or words.

Venial poetry predates printing. U forms only a small portion of the total body of poetry and is remote from the centre of the main tradition, which is the largely auditory tradition of world poetry.

We must not discriminate against parodies either even though to Hemmingway parody is the step upwards from writing on latrines walls. The mock heroic poems of the Augustans were primarily a parody of the form of the 'heroic' but they also undermined the hallowed themes, when the inflated style and the ordinary subject matter create most of the fun.

So we are the music unmakers , it seems –
Of Pastoral Park disinfecting your dreams,
At la Belle Sauwage the sardonic irregulars ,
Of skylarks the scarers , the nobblers of Pegasus ……
Unhappy those huntsmen !their hybridization
Grew the goliaths of a neurotic nation ……

LET US KNOW



Richard Tottel (d.1594) was the publisher, with Nicholas Grimald (1519-62), of 'Songs and Sonnets' known as Tottel's Miscellany (1557) which published the first English sonnets of Wyatt and Surrey. It was a popular book and the gravedigger in Hamlet mumbles a song from this collection. Tottel also published besides law –books More's Dialogue of Comfort (1553) and Lydgate's Fall of Prices (1554).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Analyse a few experiments with poetic form .

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Consider the role of translation in getting to know the poetry of the world.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What is a prose poem ? Critically appreciate a prose poem in the text above.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.5 LET US SUM UP

We have seen how a poet relates to the tradition to have and express his personal meanings . Even though epic can be looked at as the earliest of poetic forms , it has steadily gone out of favour , may be because the novel had taken over its functions . Lyric is the dominant poetic form the world over from about the fifteenth century to the present even though lyrics were written centuries before that Experiments with poetic forms and techniques continue vigorously and as world poetry is accessible anywhere because of translations poetry is changing its character an its meanings are available to a larger audience . Classical and folk poetry are also being exploited by modern poets . There is concerted move to jettison the conventionally poetic and bring in tit and bits of day to day living especially in urban spaces . Poetry , consequently . is freer now than ever before and it is more closely connected to other art forms including popular art.



2.6 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Show how browning exploited the values and mores of Renaissance Italy in his ‘dramatic monologues‘
2. Show how regional poetry can be enriched by translation of international classics.
3. Relate translation studies to post coloniality
4. Catalogue a few problems in translating regional, say assamese, poetry to English.

*****