Poetry Terms

Form:
Rhyme - a matching similarity of sounds in two or more words, especially when their accented vowels and all succeeding consonants are identical. For instance, the word-pairs listed here are all rhymes: skating/dating, emotion/demotion, and plain/stain.

Slant Rhyme - rhymes created out of words with similar but not identical sounds. In most of these instances, either the vowel segments are different while the consonants are identical, or vice versa: sliver/silver, orange/deranged, down/upon

Style - the author's words and the characteristic way that writer uses language to achieve certain effects.

Stanza – poetry’s version of a paragraph, a stanza is an arrangement of lines of verse in a pattern usually repeated throughout the poem. Typically, each stanza has a fixed number of verses or lines and a consistent rhyme scheme.
  - Couplet – a two line stanza
  - Quatrain – a three line stanza
  - Sestet – a six line stanza
  - Octave – an eight line stanza

Types of Poems (though not all poems fit into these categories and there are many others):
  - Ballad – a narrative poem that is meant to be sung
  - Concrete poem - poetry that draws much of its power from the way the text appears situated on the page. The actual shape of the lines of text may create a swan's neck, an altar, a geometric pattern, or a set of wings, which in some direct way connects to the meaning of the words.
  - Elegy - a poem or song composed especially as a lament for a deceased person
  - Haiku - consists of three lines. The first line contains five syllables, the second line contains seven, and the last line five
  - Lyric – a typically short poem expressing the personal emotion and ideas of a single speaker
  - Ode – a long lyric poem with elevated style and tone, dealing with a single theme (often written to or about a person or object)
  - Sonnet – a 14 line lyric poem that has a set form and rhyme scheme (there are several types)

Figurative Language:
The following terms I expect that you already know from previous study: alliteration, hyperbole, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, and simile. If you do not know what these terms mean, look them up.

Speaker – the narrative voice of a poem that speaks of his or her situation or feelings. Remember that in poetry, the speaker is NOT the same as the author of the poem. You cannot assume that the feelings and ideas expressed in the poem are the author’s thoughts and feelings.
Motif – a noticeable element (such as an incident, theme, reference, metaphor, etc.) that repeats frequently in works of literature.

Imagery – language that appeals to the five senses (hearing, taste, touch, smell, and sight)

Connotation – the implied meaning of a word, the extra tinge or taint of meaning each word carries beyond the minimal, strict definition found in a dictionary

Denotation - the minimal, strict definition of a word as found in a dictionary, disregarding any historical or emotional connotation

Diction - the choice of a particular word as opposed to others

Syntax - the standard word order and sentence structure of a language. If an author deviates from the standard word order (uses an original syntax), there is often meaning behind it.

Enjambment - a line having no pause or end punctuation but having uninterrupted grammatical meaning continuing into the next line

Symbol - a word, place, character, or object that means something beyond what it is on a literal level

Theme – the central idea embodied or explored in a literary work, what it all adds up to

Speaker - the narrative voice in a poem (such as a sonnet, ode, or lyric) that speaks of his or her situation or feelings. It is a convention in poetry that the speaker is not the same individual as the historical author of the poem

Subject – what the poem is about

Tone – the attitude, or stance, toward the subject and toward the reader or audience implied in a literary work; the “tone of voice” it seems to project

Mood - a mood or atmosphere is the feeling that a literary work conveys to readers. Mood is created through the use of plot, character, the author’s descriptions, etc.

Assonance – the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in words relatively near to each other whose consonant sounds differ

Consonance – the repetition of consonant sounds in the same or nearby lines

Refrain – one or more identical or deliberately similar lines repeated throughout a poem, sometimes with meaningful variation

Understatement – the opposite of exaggeration. For example: “I was somewhat worried when the psychopath ran toward me with a chainsaw.” This statement is implying that the person is actually terrified of the psychopath by stating the opposite.

Juxtaposition – the arrangement of two or more ideas side by side for the purpose of comparison or contrast.