

Poetry Lessons for the Hard of Rhyming: 102

By

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In Lesson 101 I wrote a poem, demonstrating how I set up rhyme scheme and meter. I fiddled with the poem a bit after finishing that article, and this is what I have so far.

A rainbow stretched across the sky,

from one end to another.

I longed to find the pot of gold,

but first I asked my mother.

Don't forget your rain boots, son.

And take along these cookies.

Fortune hunting's lots of fun,

but danger lurks for rookies.

I looked at her with half a smile;

she answered with a nod.

She handed me a golden key.

I thought it rather odd.

A long time ago I thought that every line had to have the same number of syllables. There are some people who still say that. If you count, you will notice that my lines have 8,7, or 6 syllables, but they still follow a pattern.

Look what happens if I add syllables just to get the count the same

A rainbow stretched across the sky

from one far end to another.

I longed to find the pot of gold,

but first I asked my kind mother.

Don't forget your green rain boots, son.

And take along these five cookies.

Fortune hunting is lots of fun,

but great danger lurks for rookies.

I looked at her with half a smile;

she answered me with a quick nod.

She handed me a golden key.

which I thought was a little odd.

Doesn't read as smoothly, does it? Wonky meter out the wazoo, eh? Yep, that's why you shouldn't just go by syllable count. Every

single line in my second version has eight syllables, but the meter is stinkier than buffalo poo.

My method is to establish rhyme scheme and meter in my first stanza. After that I brainstorm about where the poem is going, and collect rhyming words I might use. Then I write one line, one verse at a time. If there are parts that don't work, I leave them blank.

I know I need a word or words that go "DumDUH" here or "DUHdumDUH" there. I know where the holes are and what pattern of accents I need to fill in that part of my puzzle.

Now this is just my first draft, and what you see now is nowhere close to finished. There's a whole story to tell yet.

I always let poems sit for a bit, and then go back to read them to find any kinks. I also ask my rhymers friends to read them to see if they can catch any clunks I miss.

May all your spondees be bright.

****These articles are dedicated to the memory of Mary Key Ferrell and John Edward Adams.**