

Poetry

Poetry is one of the oldest genres in literary history. Its earliest examples go back to ancient Greek literature. Poetry is closely related to the term "lyric" which derives etymologically from the Greek musical instrument "lyra" ("lyre" or "harp"). In classical antiquity as well as in the Middle Ages, minstrels recited poetry accompanied by the lyre or other musical instruments. The term "poetry", however, goes back to the Greek word "poieo" ("to make," "to produce"), indicating that the poet is the person who "makes" verse.

I. Reviewing some definitions of poetry:

What is poetry? This is a question that poets, writers, philosophers and critics have over the centuries tried to answer. In fact, there are almost as many 'definitions' of poetry as there are poets. Let us take some of them:

"Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility". (*William Wordsworth*)

"Poetry: the best words in the best order". (*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*)

"Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality". (*T.S. Eliot*)

"Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds". (*Shelley*)

"Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and insight of the human soul". (*EC Stedman*)

*Let us consider this couple of dictionary definitions:

"an arrangement of words, especially a rhythmical composition, sometimes rhymed, in a style more imaginative than ordinary speech".

"a composition, in verse, especially one characterized by a highly developed form and the use of heightened language and rhythm to express an imaginative interpretation of the subject from".

II. General Strategies for Improving your Understanding of Poetry:

It is true that understanding poetry elements can present some challenges to students of English (especially beginners). In this section, we will highlight some of the things you can do to find your way into and through a poem. Here are some general strategies you can apply to improve your understanding of poetry: