

“I Hear America Singing”:

An Approach to Poetry’s Coalescent Intricacies of Sound, Structure, and Content

A Thesis Submitted to

The Faculty of the School of Communication

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

By

Meagan A. Brooks

1 April 2011

Liberty University  
School of Communication  
Master of Arts in English

---

Dr. Mark Harris, Thesis Chair

Date

---

Dr. Jaeshil Kim, First Reader

Date

---

Dr. Jim Nutter, Second Reader

Date

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One</b> – Introduction: Analyzing Poetry in Relation to Music .....	4
<b>Chapter Two</b> – Longfellow: His Day Is Done but His Music Continues .....	22
<b>Chapter Three</b> – Poe: The Beautiful, the Obsessed, and the Mentally Disturbed .....	40
<b>Chapter Four</b> – Frost: Fanfare of the Common Man .....	56
<b>Chapter Five</b> – Millay: Musical Identities—To Each His Own .....	69
<b>Chapter Six</b> – Conclusion: Reflections on the Musicality of American Poetry .....	83
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	89
<b>Appendix A</b> – Poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow .....	94
<b>Appendix B</b> – Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe .....	116
<b>Appendix C</b> – Poetry of Robert Frost .....	142
<b>Appendix D</b> – Poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay .....	151

### Introduction: Analyzing Poetry in Relation to Music

Defining and determining the quality of poetry, because of its artistic nature, is a difficult task for even the most ardent poetry enthusiast. Understanding what exactly makes a poem a poem can seem almost impossible to pinpoint, yet combinations of features distinguish poetry from prose. Although both poetry and prose comprise the basic structural elements of language, poetry boasts of a more creative twist on those elements since it strives for more of a concentrated beauty in language. Therefore, in order to create poetry of a high artistic level, poets not only deliberate word choice, but exercise care in the structuring of these words and combine them in ways that help convey the theme or emotion of the poem. The subject matter evident in the verbal content is significant in establishing meaning; however, because poetry is a highly artistic form of language, the structure and sound of the poetry ought to support or add to what is communicated through the verbal content. Peter Levi attempts to define poetry as “a particular and beautiful behaviour of language: it is less like the notation of music than like a particular performance of certain particular notes on a particular instrument” (40). When the poet understands and utilizes the multi-dimensional qualities poetry comprises, a poem becomes a superior “performance” of words, form, and sound working together to achieve a unified work of art.

Although poetry is one of the most beloved art forms, it is many times the least understood. Some claim that poetry is the fruit of spontaneity while others defend the necessary focus on technicalities involved in the construction of a poem. Some insist on analyzing the individual aspects of poetry while others staunchly argue that art should not be dissected and probed since the whole is what makes it art. A closer look at each dimension of poetry, however, no matter how seemingly insignificant, can provide details that help the reader more fully

understand the overall theme, attitude, or tone of the work. Margaret Schlauch maintains that “elementary analysis of structural parts is necessary in all the arts, no matter how dull it may seem to the impatient and the uninstructed” (51). Because the overall message of the poem may include ambiguities, an examination of the sound, structure, and verbal content is necessary even if these layers do not seem significant individually. One aspect of a poem may clearly communicate an idea while another aspect may remain ambiguous in its purpose. In this case, the ambiguous aspect, when compared to the more overtly communicative aspects, can still be analyzed with more certainty than if it were examined only individually. R.P. Blackmur defends analysis, claiming that “[i]t will by itself increase our intimacy with the words as they appear; and it will as the nexus among comparisons disclose that standard of achievement, inherent in this special use of poetic language, by which alone the value of the work may be judged” (278). Although poetry is an art form, it is made up of several elements that can be analyzed for their contributions to the poem, and if the layers of a poem are analyzed in the context of the poem as a whole, much can be learned about how the elements of the poem function and how specific elements promote the unity of the poem.

Poetry, because it is an art form, is compared to other arts such as painting and even architecture, but because of its elements evincing musical qualities, the comparison between poetry and music merits a greater degree of attention. Leonard Bernstein asserts that “language leads a double life; it has a communicative function and an aesthetic function,” and he calls poetry the “true parallel with music” (79). Although music and poetry are distinct genres, the qualities of poetry strongly resemble those of music; therefore, methods involved in the analysis of music can be applied to the analysis of poetry. This allows the critic to understand the nature of poetry to a greater degree, enabling him or her to approach poetry with a greater

understanding of its strengths. Schlauch confirms, “People study poetry as a discipline, just as they study harmonic analysis of music, in order to heighten their appreciation and to deepen their understanding of the classics” (22). While analyzing the musical elements of poetry is a fascinating study on its own, the purpose of analyzing the two art forms is to develop a greater understanding of each work as a whole. This includes understanding not only the sum of the parts but also what is achieved beyond the sum. Bernstein explains that in music, “the combination of two different chords automatically creates a third one, a new phonological identity” just as in poetry, “rhythm (sound) and content produces something new” (341). Understanding what the poem achieves as its own work is the goal, but beginning with individual elements and moving steadily toward the sum of those elements and then to the work as a whole can simplify complex issues of meaning. Although some of the elements of poems are parallel to elements of music, the poems themselves should not be termed “musical” unless all of their parts work together to promote the unity of the poem. Schlauch remarks, “All of the physical aspects of language sounds—intensity, duration, pitch, harmonic relations—contribute to a total effect of greater or less acoustic prominence. It is this complex of factors which produces the quasi-music of verse” (173). Just as one expects the melody, harmony, and rhythm of a musical piece to all work together to achieve a sense of oneness, a poem, with its elements—some musical and some not—ought to evince a sense of unity. If a poet is successful in combining its “factors,” producing a coherent whole, only then can a poem be termed “musical” in the sense that all of its parts fit together as a unified whole.

One layer of poetry that can help the work achieve “musicality” is sound—many times, the layer first noticed by a listener. According to Amy Gross, “[I]t is sound that we first experience as pleasure in the reading of poetry” (23). Even if the words of a poem communicate

a highly artistic idea, if the sounds accompanying them do not echo the same artistic level, the poem does not achieve its artistic potential. Blackmur points out that “[t]he music of words alone may lift common sentiment to great import” (238). Analysis of this layer of poetry is essential since even if a person does not understand the verbal content of a poem, he or she can still enjoy the artistic aspects of the sounds produced and perhaps even gain knowledge of the poem’s content without fully comprehending the text. Poetry, even if the verbal content is not clear to a listener, can still communicate and thereby affect the reader. T.S. Eliot explains, “We can be deeply stirred by hearing the recitation of a poem in a language of which we understand no word” (15). The sound of a poem, an entity that can be separated from verbal content and structure, is essential to the poem’s aesthetic value. Besides the verbal content and the form of the poem, the sound can also help communicate the message of a poem, whether by acting as a backdrop, supporting the meaning communicated by other layers, or creating additional meanings that embellish the main idea of the poem. For instance, assonance of low-frequency vowels, when used frequently, can create an atmosphere of dread that serves as a backdrop to the verbal content. In addition, a faster tempo can give the poem a more energetic sound, perhaps establishing an emotion in addition to what is already being communicated. Aspects of sound can be used in an almost endless number of ways to help the poem communicate artistically.

Since sounds are physical elements that can be measured scientifically, pure sound is a layer of poetry that at times can objectively reveal characteristics that relate to the meaning of poetry. Because some consonants and vowels emit certain pitches or continue a set length of time when in combination with other letters, sounds can communicate what some would term a “melodic line” that is capable of communicating an attitude or emotion, or affecting the lyrical flow of the passage. In music, a melody is quite obvious to a listener, while in a poem, what one

would consider the element most closely related to a melody requires much attention on the part of the listener. Pitch fluctuations can be difficult to hear, especially since many times, the pitches do not greatly contrast one another. Analysis of this layer must be done with caution since, as Geoffrey Leech relates, “All too often imaginative reactions to the meanings of words are projected on to the sounds of which they are composed. We must be careful, therefore, to distinguish between the generally agreed symbolic range of a sound and its associative value as apprehended by a particular reader in a particular linguistic context” (100). Although a poem may use onomatopoeic language, one cannot allow the definition of the word to color the sound of a word if that sound, in fact, is not illustrating the meaning of the word. There is room for variations in interpretations of poetry, but in some passages, the range of sounds and fluctuations between sounds in some passages is limited, even in combination with absences of sound. Levi stresses the significance of not only pitches, but also “certain silences and certain fulfilled expectations of the ear, with the subconscious expectations of the language itself and with what is particularly expected in given forms of speech” (23). The sound of poetry can, therefore, be analyzed in relation to the natural expectations of its listeners. Because silences in poetry play an integral role in poetry just as rests play an integral role in music, the sounds produced by poetry are even more similar to those in a true melody. Aaron Copland clarifies the listener’s expectations when he explains that “[a] beautiful melody, like a piece of music in its entirety, should be of satisfying proportions. It must give us a sense of completion and of inevitability. . . . the melodic line will generally be long and flowing, with low and high points of interest and a climactic moment usually near the end. Obviously, such a melody would tend to move about among a variety of notes, avoiding unnecessary repetition” (50). Poetry, in the same way, should demonstrate beauty in its sound. This does not mean that the sound patterns will necessarily

sound smooth to the ear. Sounds that communicate tensions through dissonance can help communicate the nature of a passage that is meant to sound abrupt in comparison to surrounding passages. Whether the sounds produced by the poem are melodious or dissonant, they should further the theme communicated by the words and structure to give the listener an aesthetically pleasing experience. Because poetry includes the aspects of language and sound, it can be analyzed in a way that helps listeners understand what they are hearing and why they are hearing what they are hearing. Analysis of the sound in poetry is essential in the overall analysis; however, it must be done accurately, separated from the other elements until an overall analysis is derived.

Closely connected to the sound a poem makes is a second layer—form—which comprises all the structures in which words appear. Looking at individual words can be deceiving if words are not analyzed in relation to their surroundings, a process giving the listener the context necessary for full understanding of the poem. Levi remarks, “A word is much affected by the context of other words, and a phrase by the context of other phrases as a particular colour in one corner of a picture is affected by and affects all the other colours in it” (36). Analyzing smaller structures such as parts of speech, phrases, clauses, and other structures inherent in lines and stanzas clarifies the implications of the verbal content. These structures also determine which words are emphasized since the grammar of the structures, especially the more meaningful parts of speech and emphatic positions, can give particular words considerable weight. Verbs and nouns are considered the more significant parts of speech since they reveal more information in comparison to other parts of speech; therefore, where verbs and nouns are placed within the structure of a line or stanza can help to emphasize or de-emphasize them in relation to the surrounding words. The placement of words on accented syllables within the

metric pattern or stressed beats within the rhythmic structure of the poem can draw the listener's attention to particular words. Even more significant are structures that illustrate a detour from what is expected since unexpected patterns can emphasize a particular idea. Sometimes grammatical structures and peculiar word combinations can produce ambiguity rather than clarity, making them a source of tension, but even in this case, if structures are used to further the whole poem, they add dimensions to what is communicated verbally, supporting the ideas communicated in the verbal context of the poem while strengthening the listener's experience and overall conception of the poem's message. For instance, a grammatical structure, in relation to the preceding and following structures, can promote ambiguity of meaning; however, if the poem's content is relating a struggle, the poet may purposefully use a grammatical structure that mirrors the idea of a struggle, producing tension in the poem. The ambiguous grammatical structure, therefore, strengthens the poem since it is used to produce tension that is also communicated by other aspects of the poem. Although understanding words in the context of phrases, clauses, lines, and stanzas is significant in analysis, how these smaller structures relate to each other and to the larger structures and finally to the overall poem should not be ignored, especially since how the poem reads as a unified whole determines its ability to "sing." If only smaller structures are analyzed, the significance of the poem can be lost since a poem is more than the sum of its parts. Therefore, step-by-step analyses moving from smaller structures to the structure of the poem as a whole should be completed and then related to what has already been established from analysis of the verbal content.

One way in which elements of music and poetry specifically coincide in the realm of form is through rhythm. Although poets' ideas for content sometimes originate initially just as some composers first create a musical idea, other poets begin with a set rhythm in mind before

they write the words of a poem just as composers at times begin with some kind of rhythm as a basis for a musical work. In both art forms, rhythm plays a significant role not only because it can represent the foundation of both poetry and music, but because it comprises patterns that function in meaningful ways within the context of the poem. Eliot explains that “the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure” (28). The rhythm of a poem not only helps to emphasize words, but also showcases the continuous flow of the ideas and expressions conveyed in the poem, aiding in the delivery of the verbal content. Gross emphasizes the significance of rhythm since “[r]hythmic sound has the ability to imitate the forms of physical behavior as well as express the highly complex, continually shifting nature of human emotion” (11). Although rhythm can be an onomatopoeic device, even more importantly, because the rhythm moves the poem along, it causes the content of the poem to become more vivid to the listener. Gross explains that “[r]hythmic structure offers the means by which a work of literature achieves its peculiar reality, the illusion that what we are reading is quickened with a life of its own” (13). This quality heightens the listener’s awareness of the poem because it is alive as it is read.

Since the rhythm of poetry and the rhythm of music are so intertwined, one can approach the rhythm of a poem in the same way that he or she approaches the rhythm in music. According to Leech, “[T]he rhythm of English is based on a roughly equal lapse of time between one stressed syllable and another” (106). Therefore, in a poem applying traditional structural methods, the reader can expect the steady pulse produced by the rhythm in the first line of poetry to continue without drastic variation throughout the poem. Being aware of the rhythm and analyzing it helps the reader understand not only which words or syllables are stressed but also what exactly is affecting the flow of the poem. Although the pulse may remain steady, Leech

notes “that syllables vary in intrinsic length, as well as in the length imposed on them by the rhythmic beat” (109); therefore, the characteristics of the words themselves are still retained even within the rhythm of the poem’s meter. The meter, however, in connection to the rhythm, can also affect the speed of the poem’s flow. Leech asserts that “the impression of speed increases with the number of syllables per measure” (112). By analyzing the rhythm of poetry, one can analyze the movement of the poem in conjunction with what is being communicated through the verbal content, therefore, illustrating the specific, meaningful connections between the verbal content and its rhythm—connections imperative to understanding the work as a whole.

Another element pertinent to structure in both poetry and music is parallelism or repetition with variation. Bernstein claims that “it is repetition, modified in one way or another, that gives poetry its musical qualities, because repetition is so essential to music itself” (149). In many musical forms, the melody is introduced within the first section, and later in the work, variations on the melody appear. These variations may be very similar to the melody perhaps with a few different notes or in a different octave, or even employing a different rhythmic pattern, but still maintaining a close connection to the melody. In other cases, the music may move from the first section which introduces the melody to a second section which introduces a new idea subservient to the first. Although the theme in the second section seems to contrast that in the first, eventually the connection between the two sections will be seen, and the music will once again return to its first melody. This process shows that although the music has one central theme, other melodies can add to or support the central theme yet still create variety within the work. Poetry as well usually presents one main idea or theme developed throughout the poem, yet other supporting ideas can vary and add to the theme but still preserve the continuity of the poem. Eliot argues that “in a poem of any length, there must be transitions between passages of

greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole” (18). Although music may seem different from poetry in that its musicality is obviously present, because poetry employs and depends on rhythm, the sound of the voice, and a theme with variations, it too employs musical elements. Leech furthers the comparison, stressing “that parallelism is the aspect of poetic language which most obviously relates it to music” (93). Leech’s definition of parallelism includes alliteration, consonance, assonance, and types of rhyme, focusing on how the syllables relate to each other (89).

Essential to an understanding of the sounds involved in alliteration, consonance, and assonance are definitions of the various sonorants and obstruents. Sonorants are sounds that are song-like in nature because the air flow is more unrestricted while the sounds of obstruents reveal an obstruction of air flow. Although the sounds of sonorants and obstruents will be identified and analyzed in the poetry of Longfellow, Poe, Frost, and Millay, these sounds will be identified and labeled within the actual text of each poem. Therefore, the standard IPA chart will not be used. Rather, the letters which produce the various sonorant and obstruent sounds will be highlighted and categorized according to their corresponding sounds.

Understanding the significance of individual sounds is essential to analyzing poetry, a genre that utilizes sound to express meaning. David Mason and John Frederick Nims explain that “[w]e can think of words as having not only a mind (their meanings) but also a body—the structure of sound in which their meanings live” (145). Therefore, those who study poetry have learned to connect particular sounds to particular emotions or tones. This approach is impressionistic to a certain extent, but because many poets have used particular sounds in a particular way, authors such as Mason and Nims confidently present connections between sound and meaning.

Classified as a sonorant, a nasal sound is, according to Ladefoged, “one in which the velum is lowered and there is a closure in the oral cavity somewhere in front of the velic opening.” Therefore, the air escapes only through the nasal passage (102). Because of their production, Ladefoged describes nasals as “acoustically continuant, characterized by a steady state,” “often distributed in a way that is parallel to liquids and other sonorants” (135). The nasal sounds produced by *m* and *n* can communicate different meanings. Mason and Nims claim that the *m* sound, used “for warm appreciation,” “is prolonged, not broken off; is internal (behind closed lips) and hence warm and cherished; is associated with the affectionate and sensitive lips, which bring the human child the first pleasure it knows—food and the warm presence of its mother” (158). The sound of the *n* is far different, however, since Mason and Nims describe it as “somewhat higher in tone, more a whine than a hum” (159). Therefore, the *m* sound usually corresponds to more positive ideas and images whereas the *n* sound corresponds to negative ideas.

The *l* and *r* sounds, sonorants termed liquids, involve, according to Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams, “some obstruction of the airstream in the mouth, but not enough to cause any real constriction or friction” (233). Mason and Nims describe liquids as sounds that “seem to flow on or around the tongue instead of being clicked or popped or hissed forth” (158). Because the *l* and *r* sounds do not evince much tension, they help maintain a smooth sound and can be used to unify words in poetry and, accordingly, unify their corresponding ideas.

Glides, the “wuh” and “yuh” sounds, similar to the liquids, are sonorants that communicate smooth sounds rather than those characterized by tension. Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams identify glides as “transitional sounds—halfway between consonants and vowels” (234)

while Mason and Nims call glides the “most vowel-like of the consonants” (157). Adding to the strength of glides as “transitional sounds” is the environment of glides since, as Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams note, in every appearance of a glide, a vowel immediately follows.

Finally, vowels and their corresponding sounds have great significance in how a text communicates. Mason and Nims compare vowels to “chords made up of tones and overtones from the resonating system of throat, mouth, and head” (148). Therefore, a strong connection exists between vowel sounds and the nature of music that should be included in an analysis of poetry. Mason and Nims assert that “[t]he ‘upness’ and ‘downness’ of vowel sounds affect us physically in different ways” (148). The following vowel chart depicting the various vowel frequencies aids in classifying these vowel sounds and understanding the communicated meaning of each division (see Fig. 1).

According to Mason and Nims, high-frequency vowel sounds evoke “greater vitality, speed, [and] excitement than the slower-moving, more sluggish waves of the *oo*” (149). On the other hand, Mason and Nims argue that low-frequency vowels “evoke what is powerful. . . awesome. . . ominous or gloomy” (151). Assonance, then, can be a deliberate action of the poet to emphasize a particular vowel sound and, therefore, communicate sounds that convey particular emotions.

The six stops (*b*, *d*, *g*, *p*, *t*, and *k*) will be identified within the text. While these sounds create more abrupt sounds in the flow of language, they are produced in various ways that distinguish their sounds from one another. Peter Ladefoged explains the physical movements necessary for the production of each stopped sound. To produce a *b* sound, one must keep the lips “firmly closed” in the initial attack and release in the word *bib*. A *d* sound, as evidenced in

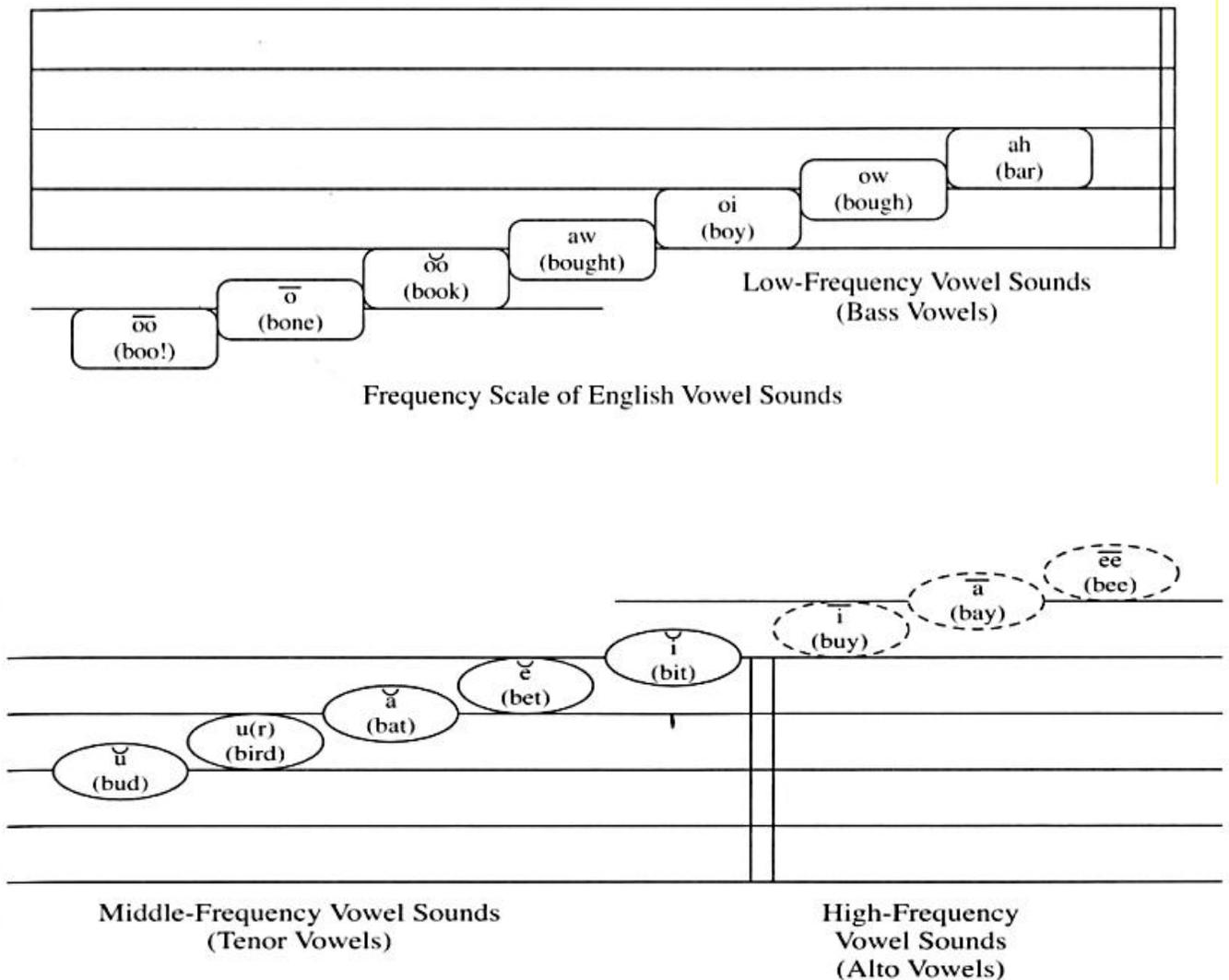


Fig. 1 Frequency Scale of English Vowel Sounds, *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry* (Boston, 2000; 148-49).

*did* involves the “tip of the tongue . . . block[ing] the vocal tract by forming a closure just behind the upper front teeth.” Producing a *g* sound in the word *gag* requires the back of the tongue “rais[ing] to make a closure against the roof of the mouth” (49). Ladefoged also notes the difference in sound between the stops already described and those produced by the *p*, *t*, and *k*. These stopped sounds are described as “more noisy” since they produce bursts of air. The

production of the *p* sound requires the lips to “close” while the *t* and *d* sounds involve the tip of the tongue hitting the region behind the teeth. *K* and *g* sounds involve the “back of the tongue contact[ing] the roof of the mouth” (52). The physical movement involved in the production of *p*, *t*, and *k* is slightly harsher in sound than that involved in the production of *b*, *d*, and *g*. Mason and Nims explain that “[a] *p* (and a *b* almost as well) can express rejection by holding back the air and then violently expelling” (161). Although not all stopped sounds communicate this idea, the harsher attack can promote a harsher action or image, an energetic motion, or a strong emotion.

Fricatives do not involve the stoppage of air flow; however, according to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, “the airflow is so severely obstructed that it causes friction” (232). This friction then can promote tension reflected by the verbal content of a poem. Therefore, the sounds of fricatives can be used to convey emotions produced by tension such as fear or anger. Stridence, comprising the *s*, *z*, *sh*, and *zh* sounds is a type of fricative that poets use frequently. The *s* sound, essentially a hissing sound, often communicates a negative sound because it compares to that of a snake. Because of the generally negative nature of the sound, this sound can be used in several ways. For instance, it can communicate danger or a mysterious unknown. The *sh* sound, on the other hand, is described by Mason and Nims as “less sharp” but having “more body than *s*. We use it, as a kind of ‘white noise,’ to overpower other sounds when we say, ‘Shhh!’ or ‘Hush!’” (160). By its various uses, stridence is used in many poems to convey negative atmospheres that support the text, whether through hissing or dominating sounds.

Affricates produce sounds similar to those produced by fricatives. Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams explain that affricates “are produced by a stop closure followed immediately by a gradual release of the closure that produces an effect characteristic of a fricative” (233). Therefore, affricates can combine the effects of stops and fricatives, allowing for a multitude of

corresponding meanings. Similar to fricatives, affricates can be used to communicate emotions associated with tension, but they can also be used to evince more abrupt and energetic sounds stemming from strong emotions.

Although the study of how particular sonorants and obstruents connect to the text of poetry may seem insignificant, individual sounds impact the meaning of words, even more so when sounds are repeated in passages with alliteration, consonance, and assonance. Mason and Nims assert that alliteration “can create a bond of identity between words, hinting that if they have sound in common, perhaps they have something more” (162), a principle that can be applied to examples of consonance and assonance as well. Observing individual sounds and steadily moving to patterns of sounds and, ultimately, to the overall sound of the poem reveals significant relationships between sound and text that would otherwise go unnoticed. Levi agrees “that so many characteristics of the whole spectrum of poetry from the greatest to the least are determined by such tiny and obvious factors as a repeated noise” (15). Therefore, repetition and parallelism can be seen in several ways in both poetry and music.

Finally, requiring more attention is the verbal content—the layer that can communicate the main ideas or feelings of the poem. Words comprising a poem are, of course, extremely important in the art form of poetry since creativity in word choice is an expected occurrence in poetry. Ideally, the idea is expressed in the most fitting words so that its creativity in language draws in and entices the listener. Blackmur asserts, “The typical great poet is profoundly rational, integrating, and, excepting minor accidents of incapacity, a master of ultimate verbal clarity” (269). The clarity of the verbal content is extremely significant since while sound and structure imply meaning, language is a system of representations in which words represent specific meanings; therefore, the verbal content has an advantage in its ability to communicate.

Calvin S. Brown explains that “language consists of sounds endowed with associations and meanings, and even in deliberate nonsense it is impossible to escape the external associations which are always present in the sounds of speech” (14). The verbal content is certainly an important layer because of its ability to communicate, but it is not necessarily the most important layer. It is, at times, the core of the idea or feeling of the poem, but without the artistic nature of the other layers, the verbal content would lose much of its nuanced flavor. Poetry tends to contrast music in this aspect since, as Brown states, “the sounds out of which the literary work is constructed must have an external significance, and those used in music require no such meaning” (268). Words act as symbols for definite meanings, and although word combinations can create ambiguities in poetry, words, because they are based on an objective system of language, are more technically able to communicate clear meanings than music is. According to Sidney Lanier in *Music and Poetry*, “[M]usical tones have in themselves no meaning appreciable by the human intellect” (7). Therefore, in music, there is no true representation of the verbal content of poetry. Music and poetry both comprise symbols, but as Nelson Goodman argues, “[M]usic is. . . a symbolic projection which need not share the conditions of what it symbolizes” (372). Although poetry seems to have the upper hand since instrumental music does not have text to make its meaning more definite, Brown acknowledges that “the unanswerable problems of the universe can be hinted at only by musical comparisons” (206) and that music is “a symbol of the human consciousness” (206-07). Both genres, therefore, are more than capable of conveying ideas and expressions of their creators when each genre’s strengths are identified and utilized. Although it has become more common for critics to describe poetry as “musical” in that a poem may be lyrical with a smooth flow and a pleasing sound, the words themselves are not a melody in the sense of a musical melody. The verbal content of poetry may not be analogous to a strictly

musical element; however, verbal content that is united with the form and sound of the poem helps the poem to be “musical” in the sense that it is unified.

Ideally, each layer of a poem—verbal content, form, and sound—works together to produce a unified work of art. Unfortunately, some poems are too reliant on one of the three aspects of the poem, and, therefore, because the parts are not balanced in their artistry, they are not as aesthetically pleasing to the listener. However, the poem that excels in every aspect, evincing a sense of unity because each aspect works towards the overall theme, can rightly be termed “musical”—not because the poem is pleasing to the ear, but because, like a piece of music, the poem “sings” as a result of its oneness.

Although works concerning the musical elements and musicality of British poets’ works are more common, such analyses of the works of a range of American poets are more difficult to find; however, musicality is a key element in many American poems. To determine what American poetry “sings” as a result of its unity, works by Longfellow, Poe, Frost, and Millay will be analyzed to serve as examples. Longfellow and Poe, two widely known Romantic poets, and Frost and Millay, two modern poets achieving greatness through different styles, have been chosen not only because their works have gained popularity, but because these poets have excelled in the verbal content, form, and sound of their poetry; therefore, they are excellent examples to use for analysis illustrating how each layer of a poem can work together, producing the same effect as a unified musical piece. The sounds created by the poems support and add to the form and verbal content, emphasizing their similarity to musical works where every part works together to form a coherent whole. While the selected poems by no means represent the gamut of poetry that can be deemed “musical,” they illustrate a method of analysis that can be used on any poem to determine its value as a unified, “musical” work of art. Since many struggle

with understanding how the nuances of poetry work and how they heighten the effect of poetry, this system of analysis, promoting a deeper understanding of poetry, should enable them to identify not only each aspect of a poem, but also the function of each aspect as it relates to the whole. Fully understanding poetry's capabilities, although it involves an orderly process, is essential not only for a true analysis of poetry but also for the pleasure from listening to poetry read.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

His Day Is Done but His Music Continues

Although Longfellow's popularity has significantly decreased since his lifetime, much of his poetry exemplifies a "musical" approach. One reason some have denounced Longfellow's works is that his poetry strictly conforms to a metric pattern. They feel that the organization of the structure takes priority over the poetry, limiting its artistry. Others may think that his poetry is devalued by its didacticism. Newton Arvin explains that Longfellow "defends poetry as being, in fact, 'useful,' but in a far higher and more ideal sense than the usual one" (38). The usefulness of Longfellow's poetry lies in the concept of its unity since its structure supports and augments the sound and verbal content of the poem, thereby establishing a unified work while engaging the reader. Although Longfellow's former fame may be attributed in part to the ease of memorization of his works due to their organized structure, there was more depth to his poetry to earn his popularity even if his readers were not conscious of what exactly attracted them. To fully understand the reasons behind his popularity, one might look at all aspects of Longfellow's poetry to determine how they work together to form a unified work that is indeed musical.

Longfellow's "The Day Is Done" (1844), a poem that inspired Greg Gilpin's choral arrangement "And the Night Shall Be Filled with Music," is highly praised by Eugene O'Neill as "one of the finest poems [Longfellow] ever wrote" (181). An analysis of the sonorants and obstruents of the poem reveals that "The Day Is Done" manipulates sound to communicate the passing of time in comparison to the movement of the ocean, uniting sound with rhythm to support the verbal sense, creating a unified and, therefore, musical poem.

One kind of sonorant Longfellow uses to unify the words of key passages while producing a smooth flow from the repetition of sounds is the nasal. An example of this occurs in

lines 13-14: “*Come, read to me some poem, / some simple and heartfelt lay*” (emphasis added). Repetition of the *m* sound produces a smooth sound, reflecting the speaker’s comfort in hearing a “heartfelt lay” (14). In lines 21-22, Longfellow draws attention to the power of music, not only through vivid adjectives but also through the unifying sound of the nasals: “For, like strains of *martial music, / Their mighty thoughts suggest*” (emphasis added). Longfellow continues his dependence on nasals in the next two lines, where the speaker’s sighs are heightened by the sounds of the nasals: “Life’s *endless toil and endeavor ; / And to-night I long for rest*” (emphasis added) (23-24). Newton in “Early Longfellow” comments on the “modest authenticity” of the poem “in its linking of Night and the thought of rest” (147), a connection emphasized even more by the nasal sounds. In the last two stanzas, the lulling effect of the nasals emphasizes the meaning of the “*rhyme of the poet*” (emphasis added) (39), and the concluding thought that “the *night shall be filled with music*” (emphasis added) (41). Therefore, Longfellow’s sense of musicality in poetry is evinced not only through his verbal content explicitly referencing music or sighs that suggest prolonged pitches but the implicit musical nature of his language.

Liquids too function as unifiers of sound throughout the poem but most significantly in the conclusion of the poem where the speaker seems to forget his troubles as he falls under the spell of the music: “And the cares, that infest the day, / *Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs, / And as silently steal away*” (emphasis added) (42-44). The repetitive *l* sound communicates the spell of the music, most notably in the final line; however, because Longfellow uses liquids in addition to nasals, he achieves an even more noticeably smooth sound than evinced previously in the poem. Therefore, the reader can sense the transition of the speaker as he drifts away from the concerns of life as a result of the music.

Although glides do not appear frequently in the poem, in the first stanza, glides emphasize one of Longfellow's most vivid comparisons. The speaker compares "the darkness" which "[f]alls from the wings of Night" (1-2) to "a feather. . . wafted downward / From an eagle in his flight" (emphasis added) (3-4). The content, which expresses a connection between the night and the eagle, is reflected by the glides connecting the two lines. Therefore, the image of the gradual approach of night is illustrated clearly and creatively through language.

In addition, Longfellow's use of vowels reveals the nuances of the mental state of the speaker. The first stanza does not employ a great variety of vowel frequencies; rather, most vowels are in the mid-frequency range with a few in the higher and lower frequencies. This combination emits more of a monotonous sound, reinforcing the somber attitude of the speaker toward the finality of the day. However, Longfellow uses a greater variety of vowel frequencies in the second stanza, where the speaker's tone is more optimistic concerning the "lights of the village" (5) as they "[g]leam through the rain and the mist" (6). A stronger dependence on high-frequency vowel sounds may seem discordant with the content of this stanza since the "lights" (5) cause "a feeling of sadness" (7) to fall on the speaker; however, this sadness is described in the next stanza as "not akin to pain" (10); therefore, a strong sense of monotony or an avoidance of high-frequency vowels would not fully support the content of the second stanza. The following eight stanzas utilize a variety of vowel sounds although the majority of vowel sounds are in the mid-frequency range. While Longfellow suggests a sense of controlled monotony with the mid-frequency vowel sounds, he also refrains from depending too heavily on them and subsequently creating a poem with one controlling emotion. Because the speaker's thoughts vary as he reflects on his feelings and their antidote (the music of the poet), the sounds corresponding to his words ought to vary as well. Additionally, the poem succeeds in communicating the power

of the sound of poetry since the poem, as a whole, “sings” through the vowel sounds. Therefore, the form of Longfellow’s poem corresponds to its content and effectively illustrates song through poetry.

Longfellow’s use of obstruents does not limit the effect of the sonorants in producing a musical poem. Although stops normally emit abrupt sounds that may seem to detract from a smooth flow of words, Longfellow alliterates stops so that while they act as interruptions in the smooth flow of the lines, they are not abrupt. For example, in the first stanza, many of the words begin with *d*. “*Day*,” “*done*,” and “*darkness*” (emphasis added), all close together in the first line, convey sounds that not only unite the three words but also soften their individual stopped sounds. Similarly in stanzas five and eight, the words “*grand old*” (17), “*bards*” (18), “*distant*” (19), “*corridors*” (20), “*days*” (29), “*devoid*” (30), “*heard*” (31), and “*wonderful*” (32), contain the *d* sound, which unifies the stopped sounds (emphasis added). Because the *d* sound is not noisy compared to other stopped sounds, it does not detract from the overall smooth accompaniment of the poem. In stanza nine, the *p* stops sound more forceful than the *d* stops; however, Longfellow again uses alliteration to soften the staccato *p* sound in the words “*power*” (33), “*pulse*” (34), and “*prayer*” (emphasis added) (36). In the final stanza, the stops become fewer and fewer, leading to the last line where the “*cares*” (42) “*silently steal away*” (44). Therefore, the more forceful sounds dissipate, and the smoother sound becomes more predominant as the speaker forgets the troubles of the day.

Stridence, another non-sonorant, is used to convey the speaker’s emotions and support the verbal content of the poem. Longfellow’s frequent use of stridence allows him to communicate a hypnotic effect which corresponds to the emotional state of the speaker. In lines seven and eight, the speaker claims that “*a feeling of sadness comes o’er me / That my soul*

cannot resist” (emphasis added). The stridence in these lines emphasizes the control emotion exerts over the speaker. Longfellow continues to use stridence in the next stanza, relating that the “sadness” (9) “resembles sorrow only / As the mist resembles the rain” (emphasis added) (11-12). The sibilance of these lines promotes a smooth, unified sound as Longfellow verbally creates images of “mist” and “rain” (12), yet in doing so, supports that image with sound reinforcing the movement of the “mist” and “rain” (12). Additionally, Longfellow, employing parallelism with sound, uses stridence to describe the antidote of the speaker’s emotion: a poem “[t]hat *shall* soothe this restless feeling, / And *banish* the thoughts of day” (emphasis added) (15-16). Several lines later, using stridence, the speaker describes the poet “[w]hose songs *gushed* from his heart, / As *showers* from the clouds of summer, / Or tears from the eyelids *start*” (emphasis added) (26-28). Besides promoting a smooth reading and using water imagery, Longfellow uses stridence to illustrate what counteracts the speaker’s gloom. The verbal content communicates the mental transitions of the speaker while the stridence of the words supports the continuous movement forward.

Complicating the sound of “The Day Is Done” is its rhythm. Longfellow uses both iambic and anapestic feet throughout the poem. While these metric patterns are not complex on their own, integrated with the poem’s grammatical structures, they create a more complex rhythm. In the first stanza, each line incorporates three accented syllables. However, because grammatical units extend into the following lines, the rhythm is more dynamic, varying the sound of stricter rhythmic patterns. For example, the first clause of the poem, “The day is done” (1), comprises two evenly spaced accented syllables. The straightforward language of this clause coupled with the punctuation separating it from the next clause reveals what O’Neill describes as a “passing of sound into silence” which is “a specialty of Longfellow, one of his most effective

artistic devices” (47). A new clause is introduced in the same line yet continued in the next line: “and the darkness / Falls from the wings of Night” (lines 1-2). This clause comprises the third accented syllable of the first line in addition to the three accented syllables of the second line. Therefore, the second clause of the poem evinces a varied rhythm in comparison to the even, simple sound of “The day is done” (1). The effect is similar to a measure with two beats followed by a measure of four beats; therefore, rhythmically, these lines support first, the finality and straightforward nature of the first clause, and then the more creative, dynamic expression of the closing of the day in the following clause.

Another significant rhythmic pattern is found in line three: “As a feather is wafted downward.” This line also extends to the next; however, the thought communicated in line three is a complete one comprising three accented syllables. Although it appears to convey a simple rhythm, the arrangement of one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables in the words “feather is” (3) sounds like a triplet note pattern since the three syllables sound evenly spaced over the duration of one metric foot. However, the words “wafted” (3) and “downward” (3) naturally sound more like eighth notes since the syllables are of equal lengths. Therefore, “feather” sounds faster than “wafted” and “downward” even though each of the three words is composed of one metric foot. As a result, Longfellow implies a varying speed throughout the line, mirroring the fluctuating speed of the feather’s descent. O’Neill calls the first stanza “successfully imaginative” since “the eye cannot help but follow the flight of the feather in its soft and soundless fall” (23). Because Longfellow employs a strict metric pattern, the combination of different patterns of stressed syllables in individual clauses and phrases makes the first stanza of “The Day Is Done” more creative, but also supports the ideas communicated verbally.

Although Longfellow varies the rhythm of the poem by using a combination of iambic and anapestic feet, because he incorporates three stressed syllables per line, he controls the tempo and can, therefore, emphasize particular words and phrases. The metronomic pulse of the poem is set by the first stanza, and the reader then senses the three dominant beats from the stressed syllables. After reading a line with more syllables yet the same steady pulse, a reader will naturally slow while reading a line with fewer syllables, an action that can emphasize the content of the line. For instance, line seven contains ten syllables while line eight contains only seven. Therefore, the reader will slow in his reading of “That my soul cannot resist” (8). The slower pace draws out the stridence, implying a hypnotic mood and emphasizing the speaker’s inability to “resist” (8). Another instance appears in the ninth stanza, where Longfellow interchanges eight-syllable and six-syllable lines. Interestingly, one of the six-syllable lines reads, “The restless pulse of care” (34); therefore, while Longfellow draws attention to the pulse of the poem through a shorter line, the content of the line discusses the “pulse of care” (34). Because the rest of the stanza follows the same syllabic pattern, Longfellow reinforces the pulse even more, conveying a sound that supports the content.

Longfellow definitely exhibits his flair for musicality in “The Day Is Done.” O’Neill asserts that “[a]mong the sound effects in Longfellow’s verse music takes a prominent place. . . [since] his lines constantly echo the sound of music, song, melody, tune, anthem, and dirge” (41). However, Longfellow controls the usage of particular musical elements to avoid any one becoming too excessive and dominating within the overall sound or rhythm of the poem. Robert Penn Warren points out that a poem “is a motion toward a point of rest, but if it is not a resisted motion, it is motion of no consequence” (251). Longfellow’s diverse use of both sound and rhythm demonstrates his accordance with this view. He is fully aware of not only the

communicability of sound and rhythm but also how these aspects relate to and further the verbal content. By merging attributes of sound, rhythm, and content, Longfellow creates one of his most united and, therefore, musical poems.

“Mezzo Cammin” (1842), one of Longfellow’s popular sonnets, conveys an altogether different tone from that in “The Day Is Done.” However, Longfellow yet again exemplifies his ability to construct a poem integrating sound, rhythm, and content that work together— what Charles C. Calhoun describes as “one of the most masterful examples of the form in nineteenth-century American poetry” (154). The poem not only employs musical elements but is, in its own entity, a musical poem.

With nasals, Longfellow illustrates the speaker’s position in life by uniting both his past and present, emphasizing the speaker’s ability to perceive both. At the end of the poem, the past, “a city in the twilight dim and vast” (11) is described as having “*smoking* roofs, soft bells, and *gleaming* lights” (emphasis added) (12) while the future is pictured as an “*autumnal* blast” (emphasis added) (13). Although the descriptions of the past and future differ considerably, the similar sounds emanating from the descriptions connect them. Therefore, the speaker proves his understanding of not only the temporality of life but also the limitations of his past and what will limit him in the future.

In addition, glides reinforce ideas that are significant to the poem’s meaning. For example, in the first stanza, glides unify details that contribute to the speaker’s view of his limited past accomplishments: “Half of my *life* is gone, and I have *let* / The years *slip* from me and have not *fulfilled* / The aspiration of my youth” (emphasis added) (1-3). Longfellow also uses glides later in the stanza to emphasize what he cannot blame for his past failures: “Not *indolence*, nor *pleasure*, nor the *fret* / Of *restless* passions that would not be *stilled*” (emphasis

added) (5-6). The speaker continues by relating what did, in fact, limit him: “But *sorrow* and a *care* that *almost killed*” (emphasis added) (7). At the conclusion of the poem, Longfellow uses glides to highlight the speaker’s description of the past with its “soft *bells* and *gleaming lights*” (emphasis added) (12) and contrasts it with the “*autumnal blast*” (emphasis added) (13) of death. The use of glides throughout the poem intensifies particular details so that the reader understands the significance of their relationship to the poem’s overall meaning.

Longfellow’s use of vowels in “Mezzo Cammin” is far different from his use of them in “The Day Is Done” since he uses a variety of vowel frequencies in each line. This variety creates more of a conversational tone that corresponds to the personal, straightforward nature of the speaker’s words. Rather than sounding rehearsed, the speaker maintains a spontaneous voice that truthfully reveals his limitations. The only passage that emits a slightly monotonous sound is in the conclusion of the poem where the speaker describes his future: “And hear above me on the *autumnal blast* / *The cataract of Death* far thundering from the heights” (emphasis added) (lines 12-13). The abundance of mid-frequency vowels in these lines suggests the steady, constant rush of “the cataract of death” (13). However, the proper tone of the speaker is supported throughout the poem because he does not sound controlled by the poet; rather, he is free to admit his failings in an honest and personal tone.

Obstruents communicate as meaningfully as sonorants do since stridence is used significantly to unify phrases and lines and to communicate the dream-like state of the speaker as he reflects on his past. Longfellow, with the *s* sound, connects the words “*indolence*” (5), “*restless passions*” (6), “*stilled*” (6), and “*sorrow*” (emphasis added) (7); and with the *sh* sound, connects the words “*passions*” (6) and “*accomplish*” (emphasis added) (8). Besides creating a unified sound which subsequently strengthens the unity of the verbal content, the stridence in

these lines conveys the speaker's dream-like or hypnotic state caused by his reveries. This mental state is again evinced in later lines which reference the speaker's past: "Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights, / A city in the twilight dim and vast, / With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights" (emphasis added) (10-12). These lines present images seen at "twilight" (11); therefore, the speaker, remembering his past, is in a dream-like state. Calhoun remarks that Longfellow is describing Kloster Marienberg, where Longfellow stayed to recover from his plethora of illnesses. Harvard gave him six months for this renewal period; however, Longfellow "wanted to extend his stay, pleading only a partial 'cure' (153-54). The stridence, then, conveys the dream-like image of the passage, reflective of Longfellow's past, while producing a hypnotic sound.

In contrast to the dream-like sounds are the harsher sounds of stops, revealing a difficult event in the speaker's past while emphasizing his limited future. Using plosive consonants, the speaker claims that "a care that almost killed" (emphasis added) (7) kept him from attaining his "aspiration" (3). In addition, Longfellow uses stops again to refer to the future which is now more vivid to the speaker: "And here above me on the autumnal blast / The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights" (emphasis added) (13-14). Compared to the stridence of the previous three lines, these lines sound harsh; however they relate to the speaker's past difficulty since "care" (7), "killed" (7), and "cataract" (emphasis added) (14) are alliterated. Therefore, the stops emphasize the speaker's past and future, unifying the poem while expressing, through sound, the limitations of the speaker.

Adding to the dimensions created by sound, the rhythm of the sonnet helps communicate the meaning of the poem. Although Longfellow uses iambic pentameter, he often varies the metric pattern which then results in a fluctuating speed. Similar to "The Day Is Done," sound

disappears into silence with the first clause: “Half of my life is gone” (1). Although this clause corresponds to a steady yet unrushed pulse, the caesura following initiates a passage in which the reader will not pause again until he or she is nearly to the end of the third line. Additionally, because of the number of unstressed syllables in the middle of the second line, the reader is propelled forward to the next stressed syllable: “The years slip *from me and have* not fulfilled” (emphasis added) (2). The natural reaction of the reader, then, is to increase the speed until he or she comes to the next pause. Lines nine and ten also present more of a variety of tempo. Because of two pauses in “[t]hough, half-way up the hill,” (9), the speed of the line decreases, suggesting the speaker’s struggle through life until the present. Longfellow’s attention to the rhythmic patterns which vary the speed throughout the poem results in a clear illustration of the speaker and his struggles.

While “Mezzo Cammin” uses an organized metric scheme, the caesuras which allow certain lines to fluctuate in speed help communicate meaning while the distinct sounds created by the words convey the speaker’s attitude, allowing the reader to enter the speaker’s world and experience his emotions, including the fear created by the “cataract of Death” (14). The poem is, essentially, a dramatic interpretation of the narrator’s mental state since the elements of sound, structure, and verbal content combine to make the poem come alive. Because Longfellow achieves this, “Mezzo Cammin” is musical in that the layers of sound, structure, and content not only add to one another, but create a whole vividly presenting the speaker’s emotional state.

“My Lost Youth” (1855), proclaimed by O’Neill to be “one of [Longfellow’s] finest poems,” is “a skilfull blending of sight and sound” (43). In addition to these two elements working together throughout the poem, G.R. Elliot remarks that continuity of the mood transforms the poem into a “strange and beautiful song” (qtd. in O’Neill 108). A careful analysis

of the poem reveals that its layers do promote unified thought, and with the refrain completing each stanza, the poem sounds more song-like than any of Longfellow's other works.

Nasals are used throughout the poem to emphasize the speaker's constant reflection on the past. In the first stanza, Longfellow stresses the focus of the speaker's thoughts: "Often I think of the beautiful town / That is seated by the sea ; / Often *in* thought go up and down / The pleasant streets of that dear old town" (emphasis added) (1-4). The *n* sound relates to the movement of the speaker's thoughts as they imitate waves in the continual process of rising and falling. Arvin remarks that Longfellow, while growing up in Portland, was "powerfully molded by the near presence of the sea—by its calm or stormy beauty, its mysterious horizons, its endlessly shifting aspects. . . its ebbing and flooding tides" (5). Therefore, he is able to create the picture of the sea he knew so well with nasals emphasizing its steady movement. Longfellow also uses nasals to emphasize the connection between the speaker's musing on the past and the action of walking "up *and* down" (3) the "streets of that dear old town" (emphasis added) (4). The whine of the *n* sound produced throughout the initial lines mirrors the speaker's continual focus on the past. Furthering the emphasis, in several passages, Longfellow uses nasals in to illustrate the constant song which embodies the speaker's past and haunts him: "And the voice of that wayward song / Is *singing* and saying still" (emphasis added) (24-25); "And the voice of that fitful song / *Sings on*, and is never still" (emphasis added) (60-61); and where the trees "Are *singing* the beautiful song, / Are *sighing* and whispering still" (emphasis added) (78-79). Longfellow expresses through sound the influence that the past holds over the speaker.

Liquids also demonstrate the influence of the past by detailing the speaker's musing while exuding a smooth, hypnotic sound. Especially effective in the refrain is the *l* liquid: "A boy's *will* is the wind's *will*, / And the thoughts of youth are *long*, *long* thoughts" (emphasis

added) (8-9). Because these lines are repeated with each stanza, they create a hypnotic sound that corresponds to the speaker's focus on the past. Additionally, in the fourth stanza, liquids stress details of the speaker's memory, communicating the vividness of the past in the speaker's mind. The *r* sound is used throughout the fourth stanza as the speaker "*remember[s]* the bulwarks by the shore" (28), "the fort upon the hill" (29), "The sunrise gun" (30), "The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er" (31), and "the bugle wild and shrill" (emphasis added) (32). The *l* sound is used just as frequently in the same stanza: "bulwarks" (28), "hill" (29), "hollow" (30), and "bugle wild and shrill" (emphasis added) (32). Besides emphasizing details showing the focus of the speaker, Longfellow uses liquids to intensify the constancy of the music of the past since "It flutters and murmurs still" (52) and "The groves are repeating it still" (emphasis added) (88). Because liquids are used not only frequently but in ways that correspond to the meaning of the content, they help produce a hypnotic effect.

Vowel sounds also reinforce the mood of the speaker as he reflects on the past and present. Although the lines of each stanza utilize a variety of vowel sounds, the refrain, which, according to Calhoun, is taken from an old Finnish song (209), achieves a monotonous sound because of its assonance. In the first line of the refrain, the assonance of mid-frequency vowels dominates: "A boy's will is the wind's will" (emphasis added) (8) while the assonance of low-frequency vowels dominates in the last line: "And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts" (emphasis added) (9). The repetition of the refrain intensifies the monotony it achieves and, therefore, produces a hypnotic effect that closes each stanza. At times, Longfellow furthers the monotony with the lines leading to the refrain. For example, in line six, nearly every vowel is a mid-frequency vowel: "And a verse of a Lapland song" (emphasis added). However, to avoid a monotonous sound that is too controlling, Longfellow, within the verses of each stanza, uses a

variety of vowel frequency sounds which correspond to the personal tone of the speaker. In fact, the speaker seems to enjoy remembering some of the details of his past: “I can *see* the breezy dome of the groves” (46). The high-frequency vowel sounds of “see” and “breezy” counteract the low-frequency vowel sounds of “dome” and “groves,” ensuring that a balance between feelings of joy and sadness is conveyed. Vowel sounds accurately reflect the mood of the speaker since monotony does not overshadow the nuances of the speaker’s thoughts.

The stridence in “My Lost Youth” is especially communicative of a hypnotic, dream-like accompaniment that corresponds to the verbal content. Quite noticeable in the refrain are *z* and *s* sounds that seem to carry throughout the entire line: “A boy’s *will* is the wind’s *will* / And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts” (emphasis added) (8-9). The stridence of these lines communicates a dream-like sound, reflecting the speaker’s focus on the past. This same effect is also evinced in the verses of the poem. In the first stanza, Longfellow uses stridence to describe “the beautiful town” (1) with the following: “*seated,*” “*sea*” and “*pleasant streets*” (emphasis added). In the second stanza, Longfellow uses even more stridence, perhaps to show the narrator’s thoughts becoming more controlled by thoughts of the past. He uses phrases like “*sudden gleams*” (11) “*far-surrounding seas*” (emphasis added) (12), and to lead into the hypnotic refrain, “[*i*]t *murmurs and whispers still*” (emphasis added) (16). Stridence continues into the next stanza with “*sea-tides tossing*” (20), “*Spanish sailors*” (21), and “*Is singing and saying still*” (emphasis added) (25). Although stridence is used in stanzas five and six, in the seventh stanza, Longfellow, broaching the climax of the poem, uses much stridence as the speaker “*remember[s] the gleams and glooms that dart / Across the school-boy’s brain*” (emphasis added) (55-56). Because each stanza uses stridence, albeit to varying extents,

Longfellow creates a mysterious and hypnotic-like sound that reflects the power of memories upon the speaker.

To avoid hindering the smooth, hypnotic sound of stridence, Longfellow limits his use of stops. Since the refrain evinces a strong hypnotic sound, few stops are used. However, Longfellow does use stops to communicate the steady beat of the ocean waves in the first stanza: “Often in thought *go up and down* / The *pleasant* streets of that *dear old town*” (emphasis added) (2-3) and in the ninth stanza: “*And* the trees that o’ershadow each well-known street, / As they *balance up and down*” (emphasis added) (76-77). Longfellow also uses stops to imitate sounds he remembers from his past: “The *drum-beat repeated* o’er and o’er” (emphasis added) (31). However, in other passages, Longfellow softens stops by alliterating “*dome*” (46), “*Deering’s*” (47), and “*doves*” (49); “*gleams and glooms*” (55); and “*part*” (58), “*prophecies*” (58), and “*past*” (emphasis added) (58). Although stops function in different ways, Longfellow uses them to produce a particular sound or merges them with the hypnotic sound of the stridence.

Verbal repetition is another element that Longfellow uses to his advantage. Because the tone of the poem is hypnotic and reflective, repetition can be effectively used to emphasize the speaker’s thoughts continually reverting to the past. In the beginning of the poem, verbal repetition is used more, perhaps to help convey the speaker’s mulling over his thoughts. Lines one and three begin with “Often.” Although the phrasing differs after the initial word, this parallelism reinforces the focus on the speaker’s thoughts. Other examples of repetition stress the listing of particular details stemming from the speaker’s memories of the past. In stanza three, “And” (20-24) initiates several lines while in stanza eight, “There” (64-66) initiates the first three lines. Although these repetitions do not necessarily clarify the meaning of the verbal content they correspond to, because the poem centers on continuous, reflective thoughts, the verbal repetition

not only emphasizes the speaker's repetitive musings, but also the more conversational language of a speaker relating his personal thoughts.

The rhythm of the poem in connection to the sound and verbal content transforms this poem into what O'Neill deems "haunting music" (46-47). Although sound on its own contributes to this effect, O'Neill claims that "[p]art of [its] charm is undoubtedly due to the delicate rhythm which has . . . a more subtle music, heard in the refrain" (43). Although the overarching metric pattern comprises pyrrhic feet, Longfellow plays with the meter, overlooking many unstressed syllables, not only to vary the meter from a pattern that could become overly monotonous, but also to control the speed and thereby emphasize particular words. In the first line, Longfellow establishes the metrical pattern, yet the strict meter of the first line is not rigidly followed throughout the poem. In line two, Longfellow omits unaccented syllables. Naturally, one would accent the first syllable of "seated," "by," and "sea." However, because there is no second unstressed syllable between "seated" and "by" as well as between "by" and "the," the tempo fluctuates, slowing the phrase "seated by the sea" (2). After sensing the metronomic pulse established in the first line, the reader will naturally want to keep that pulse steady in the following lines of the stanza. However, when syllables are missing, the reader will want to pause in the absence of them, but because there is no punctuation to direct him or her to do so, he or she will instead slow the reading of the phrase. This occurrence of "missing" syllables is not an error of the poet but a way to control the speed of the reading and promote the illusion of a more rhythmically free pattern. This device also affects the refrain of the poem. The phrase "boy's will" (8) is elongated not only because the absent unaccented syllable after "boy's" extends the hissing sound of the *s*, but also because the accented syllable following "will" is absent, lengthening the vowel glide. Additionally, "is," the following word, enters on an unaccented

syllable, emphasizing the word “will.” Drawing even more attention to this varied pattern is the same arrangement of syllables leading to the second appearance of “will.” The pattern of stressed to unstressed syllables in the last line of the refrain also stresses “thoughts,” “youth,” the first “long,” and “thoughts” (9). Edward Wagenknecht remarks on Longfellow’s metric impulses, claiming that “[Longfellow] was much freer in admitting variations than many persons believe him to have been and in some instances rather startlingly anticipative of innovations supposedly introduced by later poets who often thought of themselves as in rebellion against his kind of poetry” (127-128). Because Longfellow deviates from the established metric pattern, the refrain evinces a rhythm supporting its soothing, lyrical flow.

“My Lost Youth” faithfully portrays the humanity of a speaker who actively reflects on the past. While the verbal content reflects the honest language of the speaker, the sound and rhythm evinced through language reveals nuances concerning the speaker’s thoughts, therefore deepening the reader’s understanding of the speaker’s experience. While Longfellow demonstrates his talent for integrating musical elements into his poetry, his ability to unify the sound, rhythm, and verbal content of the poem illustrates his greater talent for merging all aspects of a poem to create poetry that is musical.

In “The Day Is Done,” “Mezzo Cammin,” and “My Lost Youth,” Longfellow proves his capability to combine the communicative aspects of sound, rhythm, and verbal content and create unified poetry that communicates through every aspect and more importantly, as a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In each poem, Longfellow uses nasals in the same manner—the *m* sound corresponding to comforting thoughts and the *n* sound corresponding to fearful and mournful thoughts. In addition, the monotony of vowel sounds conveys a haunting sound as the speaker dwells on the past. While Longfellow’s poetry is usually smooth in its flow,

he uses alliterated stops, thereby softening the abruptness of their attacks, or he uses stops to imitate a particular sound described in the content. Although those who love poetry may not realize the impact of the details comprising Longfellow's poetry, the impact of the work as a whole does not go unnoticed. The poet who is able to clearly communicate a theme or idea with sound and rhythm supporting and heightening the effects of the content to the extent that they merge to form one complete entity is a master of his craft. Despite Longfellow's fall in popularity, his poems might be examined in light of their unity since, as Shepard maintains, "it is precisely in what may be called his sense of the whole that Longfellow is most remarkable as technician and creative artist" (xliii).

Edgar Allan Poe:

The Beautiful, the Obsessed, and the Mentally Disturbed

Edgar Allan Poe, whose poetry is far different from Longfellow's, remains popular with audiences today. Known for his imaginative, morbid poems and stories, Poe draws in his readers by focusing on one overall effect. In his "Philosophy of Composition," Poe relates, "I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*" (676), later, "looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect" (676). By focusing on one "effect," such as an overwhelming sense of hopelessness, Poe manipulates each dimension of poetry to bring his chosen effect to life. One aspect Poe gives full attention to is sound and its power to encompass the reader. According to Richard M. Fletcher, "as his poetic career evolved, Poe became increasingly sensitive to tonal values and increasingly capable in the way he handled words" (28). However, although Poe concentrated on emotionally-based themes and sounds, he did not fail to consider the mind in the creation of poetry. Edward H. Davidson reiterates that Poe "always remained half-rationalist and half-organicist" (44). He used his own knowledge to carefully craft poetry so that it would elicit the emotional response that he intended. Davidson explains, "[Poe] could precondition what response the reader should have to the mood, texture, idea of a poem, and he could, even more, induce the same responses in all readers of his poem" (70). Rather than striving for didactic poetry, Poe focused on emotion and the creation of it in as tangible a form as possible. To do this, he had to focus on the unity of the poem, for all the parts would need to correspond to one another to create an emotional effect that would translate to his audience. Poe was successful in conveying emotions and a controlling effect in his poetry because the sound and rhythm of his

poetry supported the themes in the verbal content, a combination producing an effective, musical work.

In “To Helen” (1831), Poe uses a variety of vowel sounds ranging across the frequency spectrum, giving the poem more of a natural, conversational tone. Because the poem is addressed to Helen of Troy, it evinces a personal yet poetic sound; while the speaker sounds honest, he also sounds imaginative. Only one line in the entire poem evinces a lower, monotonous sound: “On desperate seas *long wont to roam*” (emphasis added) (6). In the last four words, all the vowel sounds are low-frequency, heightening the speaker’s feeling of hopelessness while “[o]n desperate seas” (6). The next line, however, contrasts this tone as the speaker dwells on Helen’s beauty: “Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face (7). “Thy” and “hyacinth” (emphasis added), producing two high frequency syllables, help dispel the gloom effected by the previous line. Because the instances of repetitive vowel frequencies are few, in his poem as a whole, Poe achieves a sound displaying the natural fluctuations of the human voice, thus establishing an honest tone; but more importantly, through vowel sounds, Poe clearly demonstrates the contrast between the speaker’s hopelessness away from Helen and his hope while with Helen.

To highlight Helen’s beauty with more than vowel sounds, Poe alliterates stops and glides to emphasize attributes of Helen. In the beginning of the poem, the speaker compares Helen’s “*beauty*” (emphasis added) (1) to “*barks of yore*” (emphasis added) (2), drawing attention to the metaphor through alliterated stopped sounds. Because these abrupt sounds occur at the beginning of the poem, they are not contrasted with many previous sounds; however, they are still noticeable since in the following lines, Poe uses a smoother sound comprising alliterated glides: “The *weary, way-worn wanderer*” (emphasis added) (4). Poe also communicates the hypnotic effect of Helen on the speaker by using alliterated fricatives, stridence, and long *i* vowel

sounds: “Thy *hyacinth hair*, thy *classic face*” (emphasis added) (7). Furthering the emphasis on the effects Helen has on the speaker, Poe applies alliteration to describe the speaker’s figurative “home”: “To the glory that was *Greece*, / And the grandeur that was *Rome*” (emphasis added) (9-10). Describing Helen with alliterated stops produces an articulated sound implying that the speaker is proclaiming these thoughts with strong emotion. Therefore, throughout the poem, Poe purposefully uses alliterated sounds corresponding to and intensifying the speaker’s emotional response to Helen.

Although Poe does not alliterate in the final stanza, he does vary the grammatical structures to contrast them with those in previous stanzas and by doing so, portrays the emotional climax of the speaker. For example, the speaker cries out with the interjections “Lo!” (11) and “Ah” (14) and speaks within the structure of two exclamatory sentences. Allen Tate remarks that “the restrained exclamation ‘Ah, Psych’ is one of the most brilliant effects in romantic poetry” (221). The speaker crying out to Psyche, the goddess with whom Cupid fell in love, vividly impresses on the minds of readers the speaker’s feelings for Helen, yet the manner in which Poe presents this allusion is significant in that it appears in a stanza that, for the first time in the poem, uses exclamatory sentences. While previous stanzas reveal the musings of the speaker, the transition into exclamatory words and structures in the final stanza supports the intense emotion of the speaker, culminating from his continuous reflections on Helen.

Accompanying the sound of the poem, the rhyme schemes of “To Helen” vary since each stanza follows its own pattern. Stanza one uses an ABABB rhyme scheme while stanza two uses ABABA and stanza three uses ABBAA. Because the rhyme schemes are slightly different from one another yet still maintain similarities, a musical balance of repetition and variation is achieved; therefore, a unified sound pervades the poem. Resulting from these variations, Poe’s

rhyme clearly does not become sing-song, but neither is it so varied that a reader notices abrupt changes in the rhyme scheme. Establishing coherence in the sound, the fluctuation in rhyme mirrors the variety of vowel and consonant sounds used in the poem. Poe shows his ability to connect lines even though the rhyme scheme changes. For example, in the second stanza, the reader would expect the last lines to follow the BB rhyme scheme (as they do in the first stanza); however, in the second stanza, the last lines follow a BA rhyme scheme, yet they are overtly connected with the alliteration of “glory” (9) and “grandeur” (emphasis added) (10). Employing various rhyme schemes, Poe does not allow the rhyme to become overbearing, yet, with rhyme, he maintains the unity of the poem.

The rhythm of “To Helen” is also significant in how it fluctuates from stanza to stanza. The first four lines of each stanza adhere to iambic tetrameter, but the last line of each stanza does not. In the first stanza, the last line comprises iambic trimeter: “To his own native shore.” Therefore, a pause exists between the end of the line and the beginning of the next stanza (the equivalent of one metric foot or one pulse). This pause corresponds to the content of the poem in that the speaker had reflected on his journey on the seas until the thought of Helen “brought [him] home” (8). Therefore, a subject shift and a time shift are indicated through the rhythm of the first stanza.

The final lines of the second stanza present a more apparent yet still slight deviation. Lines nine and ten begin with an unstressed syllable followed by three iambic feet. The parallelism of the meter helps unify the two lines (especially since the alliteration involved already joins them). However, the sound of these lines is significantly unified by Poe’s use of sprung rhythm. The rhythm of both lines emphasizes four syllables per line: “*To the glory that was Greece*” (9) and “*And the grandeur that was Rome*” (emphasis added) (10). Because the

reader has grown accustomed to the speed established by the previous lines, he or she will naturally aim to keep that speed constant in the last two lines of the stanza. The illusion of the sound of a four-line stanza lends itself to a sound of completion, which is appropriate since the speaker is concluding his thoughts on the past and turning toward Helen's vivid effect on him in the present.

In the final stanza, Poe's rhythmic patterning contains variances that perhaps convey a continuing idea rather than a finalized ending. Because of the exclamatory words and structures used in this stanza, declaring a surge of emotion, the pattern is already varied to a certain extent. However, more significant are the patterns of the final two lines in the stanza. Line four begins with "Ah, Psyche," comprising two stressed syllables, delaying the appearance of iambic feet until later in the line with "the regions which." This line contains only seven syllables as opposed to the standard eight. Although the syllable count does not seem significant since variations of this kind have occurred in previous stanzas, the fourth line runs into the final line, which also is shorter than what one would expect. The last line, "Are Holy-Land" (15) includes only two iambic feet. Therefore, the reader is left with an awareness of the absence of words. However, the absence of words and, accordingly, a lack of finality to the poem connects to the image of Helen conveyed in the last stanza. The speaker, using light imagery to describe Helen, pictures her "in yon brilliant window-niche" (11), holding "[t]he agate lamp within [her] hand" (13). The light imagery impresses the reader with Helen's continuing effect on the speaker; therefore, the absent syllables of the last stanza help the poem end appropriately. Rather than ending with a sense of finality, Poe uses a pattern that indicates the very opposite—that Helen's impact will live on despite the end of the speaker's words. Davidson believes that the poem's "subject is the way the mind can move toward the past and, in some such symbol as the indefinable beauty of

woman, is able to comprehend a world and culture long vanished from this earth” (33).

Therefore, Poe’s “To Helen,” in its progression, brings not only Helen to life, but a “world” that does not end with the concluding stanza.

With its melodious sounds, revealing grammatical structures, and varied rhythmic patterns, “To Helen,” demonstrates Poe’s ability to master the aspects of poetry in the artistic creation of a unified whole. The combination of pitch fluctuations, rhyme schemes, and varied metric patterns do not claim too much of the reader’s attention, but they do support the nature of the poem. The speaker’s focus is on the beauty of Helen; therefore, the form of the poem ought to communicate beauty as well. Poe does this through an imaginative combination of sound and rhythm. With his focus on beauty and its power, Poe creates a work that affects the reader just as Helen has affected the speaker of the poem.

Poe’s “Annabel Lee” (1849), another poem focusing on a woman, also utilizes aspects of sound to create a unified, musical poem. Using particular sounds and patterns, Poe successfully creates an atmosphere revealing the mental state of the speaker.

Besides rhyme, the most obvious aspect of sound throughout the poem is verbal repetition. In the first stanza, Poe uses the phrase “many and many” (1), repeats the words “maiden” (3 and 5) and “lived” (3 and 5), and uses the verb forms “love” and “loved” (6). Although on its own, this repetition is emphatic, because these repetitions occur on stressed syllables, they are even more noticeable.

It was many and many a year ago,

In a kingdom by the sea;

That a maiden there lived whom you may know

By the name of Annabel Lee;--

And this maiden she lived with no other thought

Than to love and be loved by me. (emphasis added) (1-6)

Additionally, similar words and lines are repeated in following stanzas. For example, in the second stanza, “In this kingdom by the sea” (8) nearly replicates the second line of the first stanza: “In a kingdom by the sea” (2). In addition, Poe uses even more repetition of the verb *love* which is extremely noticeable because nearly every repetition occurs in one line: “But we loved with a love that was more than love” (9), and it is again repeated in line 11: “With a love. . .”

I was a child and she was a child,

In this kingdom by the sea;

But we loved with a love that was more than love—

I and my Annabel Lee—

With a love that the winged seraphs in Heaven

Coveted her and me. (emphasis added) (7-12)

In the third stanza, the second line repeats the second line of the first stanza.

And this was the reason that, long ago,

In this kingdom by the sea, (emphasis added) (13-14)

Although stanza four redirects the attention of the reader to the cause of Annabel Lee’s death, verbal repetition connects the two stanzas with “A wind blew out of a cloud by night / Chilling my Annabel Lee” (15-16) and “That the wind came out of the cloud, chilling / And killing my Annabel Lee” (25-26). Stanzas four and five are linked by the mention of “angels” (21 and 30). Much repetition is also seen in the final stanza with repetition of the words “my darling” (39), the line “Of the beautiful Annabel Lee” (35 and 37), and the repetition of the last two lines: “*In her sepulchre there by the sea -- / In her tomb by the side of the sea*” (emphasis added) (40-41).

The repetition of words, phrases, and lines aids not only in the coherence of the poem but also in signifying the speaker's state of mind. Although the variety of vowel sounds reveals a more conversational tone, the extent of repetition suggests that the speaker is overwhelmed and mentally disturbed by Annabel Lee's death. The repetition becomes extremely obvious in the last stanza as the speaker relates his intent to stay with Annabel Lee in her grave. Therefore, the excessive repetition communicates that the speaker is and may remain obsessed with his lost Annabel Lee.

Even the rhyme scheme of the poem reflects the disturbed mental state of the speaker. Each stanza has its own rhyme scheme; however, the complexity of each rhyme scheme changes with each stanza. Although the poem begins with an ABABCB pattern, by stanza three, the rhyme scheme is more complex—ABCDBEB—where the speaker recounts Annabel Lee's death. However, by the end of the poem, the speaker uses the simplest rhyme scheme of the poem—AABABBAA. This emphasizes the verbal repetition already apparent to show the inability of the speaker to escape his mental struggle. Another element of the rhyme that connects to the content of the poem is the assonance of long *e* sounds, reiterating the sound of "Lee" in "Annabel Lee." These sounds are heard throughout the poem: "many" (1), "sea" (2, 8, 14, 20, 24, 31, 40-41), "me" (6, 12, 18, 22), "She" (7), "we" (9, 28-29), "reason" (13, 23), "beams" (34), and "dreams" (emphasis added) (34). The emphasis on this sound mirrors the emphasis the speaker places on his beloved. Interestingly, the conclusion of the poem demonstrates assonance with a long *i* sound: "rise" (36), "bright eyes" (36), "night-tide" (38), "I" (38), "lie" (38), "side" (38, 41), "life" (39), and "bride" (emphasis added) (39). This change in rhyme corresponds to a mental change of the speaker since he is now narrating in present tense and has most likely, as evinced by the text, lost all mental control.

In addition to the sound conveying the mental state of the speaker, the meter emits a spontaneous sound—appropriate for a speaker who is mentally unstable. The anapestic meter of the poem allows the speed of the poem to slow or quicken abruptly—a fitting accompaniment to a speaker whose words and verbal repetition already show the disintegration of his mental stability. Throughout the poem, the first line of each stanza comprises anapestic tetrameter with the following line comprising anapestic trimeter. This pattern is continued throughout each stanza, producing the sound of seven-foot anapestic lines since, in each pair, the content of each corresponds to the other. Because of the metric variation in both kinds of lines, the speed fluctuates quite often. For example, in the last line of the first stanza, “Than to love and be loved by me” (6), because an unstressed syllable is missing between “love” and “and,” the reader naturally slows on the word “love.” This also occurs in the third stanza: “In this kingdom by the sea” (14). In both instances, the speaker is holding onto his “love” and the “kingdom” that he once knew and is no more. His emphasis on the past and his inability to let go of his love suggests that he cannot move on to live in the present; therefore, the meter slowing down in these places is appropriate to the poem. Interestingly, in the last two stanzas, the speaker confines himself more to a strict anapestic pattern. He uses fewer variations and sounds as if he were being controlled by the rhythm of the poem rather than creating it. The last two stanzas focus on the love the speaker experienced with Annabel Lee and the idea that he will never leave her even though she is dead “[i]n her sepulchre there by the sea” (40). As the speaker’s mind is overtaken by his thoughts, his thoughts are overtaken by the rhythm of the poem—a fitting comparison. Richard Wilbur comments that “[‘Annabel Lee’] begins with the language and movement of ballad. . . but instead of regular stanzas, a consecutive story, a refrain, and the expected variations of rhyme, we have a changeable stanza, elaborate and irregular repetitions, and a rapt,

chanting insistence on such rhymes as *sea, Lee, me, and we*" (164). The combination of "irregular repetitions" and the "chanting insistence" of select words convey the attitude of the speaker towards his beloved in sound and rhythm that supports the theme of the verbal content. In this way, Poe quickens his theme musically, shaping every detail of the poem so that the "effect" is clear to the audience.

In "The Raven" (1845), a poem much like a narrative with its progressive plot line, Poe again exhibits his mastery of sound and rhythm in communicating verbal content. Although the sheer length of the poem aids in the assonance and pounding rhythm leaving a lasting impression on the reader, the sound and rhythm without the corresponding content would cause readers to back away from such heavy repetition. However, because the plot of the poem is supported by the sound and rhythm, this poem is a masterpiece rather than an exercise in assonance.

Poe uses alliteration of sonorants in "The Raven" to dwell on particular descriptions through sound. For example, in the first stanza, with glides, the speaker describes himself as "weak and weary" (emphasis added) (1) and later, with nasals, he has "nodded, *nearly napping*" (emphasis added) (3). In the second stanza, the speaker, using liquids, describes Lenore as a "rare and radiant maiden" (emphasis added) (11). Additionally, in response to the Raven's speaking the word "nevermore," the speaker confesses with nasals, "*Much I marveled*" (emphasis added) (49). Therefore, the alliteration heightens the effect of the descriptions and of the passages that signal transitions in emotions from pessimism to hopefulness to surprise.

Rather than drawing attention to descriptive details, assonance conveys the intensity of the Raven's message of hopelessness and greatly contributes to Poe's achievement of one controlling effect. In each stanza, the last word of lines two, four, five, and six contains the same vowel sound. For example, the first stanza uses the words "lore" (2), "door" (4 and 5), and

“more” (6). Although the assonance of each stanza is significant in communicating a steady, gloomy sound, assonance of the same low-frequency vowel sound creates a pervasively gloomy atmosphere reflective of the setting of the poem. In addition, the assonance effectively supports and heightens the morbid nature of the verbal content; therefore, the poem sounds more like a dirge narrating the speaker’s realization that he will never again see Lenore, nor will he ever escape from the hopelessness that surrounds him.

Poe also uses assonance in places other than the ends of lines to create rhyme that evinces a more dramatic sound indicative of the dramatic narrative of the poem. In the first stanza, besides the internal rhyme of “dreary” and “weary” (emphasis added) (1) which draws the reader into the setting of the poem, rhyme occurs throughout the stanza, emphasizing the entrance of the Raven. The speaker relates, “[S]uddenly there came a *tapping*, / As of some one gently *rapping*, *rapping* at my chamber door / . . . *tapping* at my chamber door” (emphasis added) (3-5). The rhyme in combination with the verbal repetition emphasizes the Raven’s insistence in his arrival—a foreshadowing of his insistent and repetitive communication with the speaker. This directly opposes the speaker’s insistent wish to clear his mind: “Eagerly I wished the *morrow*; -- vainly I had sought to *borrow* / From my books surcease of *sorrow*—*sorrow* for the lost Lenore” (emphasis added) (9-10). Although the Raven’s “rapping” (21) and “tapping” (22) end, his presence and the message he bears will never end for the speaker. In other stanzas as well, the rhyme applies to passages concerning time. In the fifth stanza, rhyme lengthens the awkward moment for the speaker when, after he opens the door, “the silence was *unbroken*, and the stillness gave no *token*” (emphasis added) (27). Although Poe continues his use of rhyme throughout the rest of the poem, those instances are a result of repetitive passages.

To articulate sounds in the midst of a strong emphasis on assonance, Poe at times uses stops in the poem to limit the poem's effect of hopelessness from becoming so pronounced that the reader fails to be attentive to the content. After the speaker opens the door, he is "[d]oubting, *dreaming dreams* no mortal ever *dared to dream* before" (emphasis added) (26). The less abrupt sound of the *d* supports the content since the excessive alliteration in conjunction with repetition creates a smoother, dream-like sound. However, later in the poem, the speaker, using harsher sounding alliterated stops, describes the Raven as "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt" (emphasis added) (71); and closer to the end of the poem, when the speaker feels overwhelmed by hopelessness, he angrily addresses the Raven using alliterated stops: "Whether *Tempter* sent, or whether *tempest* tossed thee here ashore, / *Desolate* yet all *undaunted*, on this *desert* land enchanted (emphasis added) (86-87). Thus, while the alliteration of stops can communicate a variety of emotions, the speaker's use of stops communicates his growing frustration in response to the hopelessness of his situation. Poe not only achieves variation in sound and articulation in contrast to assonance, but sounds that convey the mental progression of the speaker.

In addition to stops and assonance, stridence is used to create an atmosphere of tension that reveals the speaker's fears. In the second stanza, the speaker is trying to keep his mind from dwelling on Lenore: "[V]ainly I had sought to borrow / From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore" (emphasis added) (9-10). The stridence in these lines conveys a hypnotic tone, corresponding to the speaker's desire to clear his mind of thoughts of Lenore and focus on his books. Tension between what the speaker would do and what he is capable of doing is evinced through the *s* sound. In the next stanza, Poe again uses stridence to communicate the speaker's reaction to "the *silken, sad, uncertain rustling* of each purple curtain" (emphasis added) (13). The stridence again conveys tension since the speaker does not know what is causing the

sound. He is so fearful that he has “to still the beating of [his] heart” (15). Therefore, in these lines, the stridence corresponds to the unknown and fear of the unknown; he is afraid that he may never again see Lenore. After the speaker hears the Raven speak in his presence, he reacts with stridence: “Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken, / ‘Doubtless,’ said I, what it utters is its only stock and store” (emphasis added) (61-62). Therefore, although the speaker knows that the Raven is the source of the mysterious noises, the tension he feels is not relieved since he does not know the intentions of the Raven. He returns to stridence again as he tries to decipher the meaning of the Raven’s words: “This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing” (emphasis added) (73). Then immediately before the speaker comprehends the Raven’s words, stridence again contributes to the tension-filled atmosphere: “Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer / Swung by Seraphim” (emphasis added) (79-80). While stridence is used several times, the sound communicates the speaker’s tension concerning his fear of the unknown as it relates to both the Raven and his “lost Lenore.”

To emphasize the emotion of the speaker in how he responds to the Raven, Poe uses verbal repetition—a device evidenced most of all in the refrain. By the third stanza, the speaker becomes anxious about the tapping he has heard on his door; therefore, he repeats the words “visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door” (16-17) to reassure himself—evidenced by the last line that “This it is and nothing more” (18). Again in the sixth stanza, the speaker attempts logically to explain the noise he hears, believing that “[s]urely. . . *surely* that is something at [his] window lattice” (emphasis added) (33), and in the next two lines, he expresses his desire to “this mystery explore” (34-35). By the seventh stanza, the speaker is becoming more agitated. This state of mind is evinced subtly through the repetition of the word “perched” (40- 42), emphasizing the Raven’s permanent residence in the speaker’s home. In stanza nine, the speaker

repeats the phrase “above his chamber door” (52-53), also emphasizing the permanence of the Raven’s position in the speaker’s home. Also, in lines 58-59, the speaker draws a parallel between “[o]ther friends [who] have flown before” and “as my hopes have flown before,” believing that the Raven will leave soon. But the bird remains and the refrain continues, accentuated with the repetition of “ominous” (70-71). The narrator seeks some kind of comfort, calling out, “Respite—respite” (82) and “*Quaff*, oh *quaff* this kind nepenthe” (emphasis added) (83); however, the Raven does not heed the speaker’s frantic call. According to Davidson, “The second half of the poem is action in disorder. The student quickly loses hold of himself and on reality: the bird’s monotonous intoning of one senseless word drives him into reverie” (87). However, to show that the speaker does not find comfort, this pattern is continued throughout the poem since every fourth and fifth line of the stanza includes some kind of repetition. Usually the repetition includes some kind of variation, similar to a musical theme that is repeated with variations throughout a musical work. The verbal repetition in the poem significantly emphasizes the speaker’s state of mind as his reason unravels, yet because the failure of language so accurately reflects the speaker’s disintegration, the verbal repetition is united with the content of the poem.

Another element supporting the sound and content of the poem is the meter. The first five lines of each stanza are organized into trochaic octameter with the last line of each stanza in trochaic tetrameter. Although this pattern is not often used in poetry, it evinces a more forced, plodding sound indicating the difficulty of a situation; therefore, this meter unites itself with the poem as a whole. As the speaker struggles in his reaction to the Raven’s message, the trochaic meter keeps the poem moving forward. However, in stanza eleven, the final line begins with an unstressed syllable and is composed of only three trochaic feet. This change in meter stresses the

Raven's response to the speaker "Of 'Never-nevermore'" (66). By stanza fifteen, the meter does not correspond smoothly with the text. The speaker muses, "Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore" (86). The flow of the line is interrupted by the pause after "sent." Then, later in the stanza, the speaker voices his greatest fear to the Raven: "Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore" (89). The choppy rhythm employed reflects the speaker's inability to communicate with smooth, controlled language. However, after the speaker reaches his emotional breaking point in response to the Raven's message, he returns to the dirge-like rhythm of the strict trochaic meter as the dénouement begins. Claude Richard explains that "[t]he poem rests on a twofold effect of monotony which is primarily evocative of the state of the narrator's mind: the monotony of semantic repetition (refrain) and the monotony of prosodic repetition (cadence)"; this becomes "an effect of inescapable *sameness*" (198). While the poem's rhythm and the droning assonance of the refrain seem overwhelmingly simple, both aspects support Davidson's claim that the poem includes "the uses of pictorialism to suggest the inner workings of a disturbed consciousness and also the religious necessity, the drive of a consciousness toward understanding" (84). The "drive" is emphasized by the hammering sounds of the rhythm as the speaker becomes fully aware of his loss. By functioning in relation to the theme implied by the verbal content, the meter of the poem heightens the transitions of the speaker's emotional state.

Edgar Allan Poe, a poet concerned with communicating one dominant "effect," succeeds in doing so by unifying the dimensions of poetry. He brings the beauty of Helen to life through an honest account of the speaker, evidenced by a variety of vowel sounds and grammatical structures that reveal his love for her. He uses assonance to reveal a man's obsession with Annabel Lee and his subsequent disintegration as he loses control of language. Finally, Poe

composes a dirge-like narrative utilizing a pounding rhythm together with assonance, stridence, and repetition to reveal the progression of the speaker's fear becoming reality. These three poems illustrate how Poe uses repetition and variation to correspond to the meaning of the poems. In "To Helen," Poe balances repetition and variation by using alliteration but also using a variety of rhyme schemes, vowel sounds, and grammatical structures. This balance presents the speaker as a sane man who genuinely loves Helen. In contrast, Poe does not balance repetition and variation in "To Helen" or "The Raven." Instead, the repetition, dominating the poems, reveals the troubled minds of the speakers. Without musical elements and unity between the dimensions of sound, grammatical structures, and verbal content, these poems, rather than creating an experience for reader, would alienate themselves from their audience. Poe's dramatic themes cannot be appreciated without the appropriate environment where they become real to his audience. While other poets of his time were not nearly as ambitious as Poe in his dramatic attempts, because Poe created music that brought his emotions to life, he succeeded in creating musical poetry that still enchants readers today.

Robert Frost:

Fanfare of the Common Man

Robert Frost, although classified as a modern poet, maintains more of a traditional approach to poetry because he used traditional conventions of poetic form. Lawrence Thompson asserts that “[t]he restrictions which Frost accepts in his theory of poetry save him from the dangers of two extremes: nothing of content (pure art) and nothing except content (pure preaching)” (18). Although Frost’s poems are musical since they strike a balance of form and content while achieving a sense of unity throughout, they are not musical in the same way as the poetry of Longfellow or Poe. Rather, Frost’s words and grammatical structures, with their resulting pitch fluctuations, depend more on the conversational tone of the human voice by employing simpler grammatical structures and a variety of pitch fluctuations to compose the music of everyday speech. Rather than conveying one emotion through assonance as Poe does, Frost relies on natural speech to convey its own music. Frost’s music is that of the sounds heard in everyday conversation; therefore, his poetry flows quite naturally, yet his arrangement of words and phrases is musical. Because the sounds of Frost’s poetry ring true with the reader, connecting to him or her on a human level, yet also create beauty apart from their conversational qualities, Frost communicates distinctive, meaningful sounds in his poetry that help clarify and deepen the meanings derived from the verbal content.

“Desert Places” (1936), one of Frost’s most haunting poems, makes significant use of sonorants to achieve a song-like effect that complements the haunting nature of the poem’s theme. Of the sonorants, Frost focuses especially on nasals and liquids to promote cohesion not only in the individual lines but also throughout the stanzas, creating a more resonant sound. Therefore, the song-like quality of the stanzas continues for the length of the poem.

The repetition of particular sonorants such as liquids shows Frost's ability to use sound to heighten verbal meaning. For instance, in the first two lines of the first stanza, the *l* sound is used multiple times to stress the continual falling of snow and the fast approach of night while in the third line, the *r* sound is used twice to emphasize the amount of snow on the ground. In the last line, the *l* sound is again used to describe the ground with "But a few weeds and stubble showing last" (emphasis added) (4). Although Frost uses two types of liquids to avoid the text sounding monotonous, both the *l* and *r* sounds unite and emphasize similar ideas so that the reader has a clear image of the wintry scene before the speaker. In the second stanza, Frost uses the *r* sound more frequently since it is part of the rhyme scheme; however the *l* sound is still significant in phrases such as "The loneliness includes me" (emphasis added) (8). The first two lines of the third stanza stress the *l* sound as well since variants of the word *lonely* appear three times. However, a slight shift in attitude in the last two lines results in fewer liquids, causing the sound of the lines to not be quite as lyrical as before. In contrast, the final stanza includes several instances of the *r* sound as Frost establishes the intensity of the speaker's fear. The word "scare" (emphasis added) connects to the distance "Between stars—on stars where no human race is" (emphasis added) (14). Additionally in the last line, the *r* sound in "scare" (emphasis added) connects to "desert places" (emphasis added) (16), leaving the reader with a strong sense of the speaker's fear.

Additionally, nasals are used throughout the poem to add to its cohesive sound and support the apprehensive tone of the speaker. Because Frost uses several participles, the *ng* sound is prevalent. However, nasals are also used to connect key words such as "snow" and "night" (1), "animals" and "smothered" (6), "loneliness" and "unawares" (8), "blanker whiteness" (11), and "no expression" (emphasis added) (12). Because these words refer to

powerful images or ideas communicating the haunting tone of Frost's theme, the nasal *n* sounds, which can be used to evince a tone of complaining, support the speaker's reaction to desert places.

Although the obstruents are not as prevalent as the sonorants, the stops and fricatives also play an important role in the sound of the poem. Stops are used to communicate more abrupt ideas or energetic emotions. Line seven, "I am *too absent-spirited to count*" (emphasis added), includes more stops than the surrounding lines, emphasizing the speaker's emotional state which is stated quite abruptly in comparison to the previous lines focusing on the wintry scene. Stops are also used frequently in line eleven: "A *blanker whiteness of benighted snow*" (emphasis added). This line references an image of loneliness as capable of overtaking the speaker. Therefore, the image represents something dangerous, made more so by its percussive sounds created by the stops. The idea of a fearful image is carried on further in the poem since the speaker reacts to his fear, claiming, "They *cannot scare me with their empty spaces*" (emphasis added) (13). Although Frost does not use an overwhelming number of stops in "Desert Places," when they are used, they communicate, through sound, the idea conveyed through the verbal content of the passage.

Frost also uses fricatives to communicate and emphasize ideas in his poetry. In the first stanza, the speaker frequently uses an *f* sound. The following examples occur in the first stanza: "falling. . . *falling fast, oh, fast*" (emphasis added) (1), "*field*" (emphasis added) (2) and "*few*" (emphasis added) (4). In addition, stridence is used in the same stanza: "*smooth in snow*" (emphasis added) (3) and "*weeds and stubble showing last*" (emphasis added) (4). While the *f* sound, with its bursts of air, is more energetic, suggesting the movement of the falling snow, the stridence produces a steadier sound, reflecting the "*smooth*" (emphasis added) covering of

“snow” (emphasis added) (3). In the second stanza, stridence is used to emphasize the power of loneliness over the speaker in that it, like the snow, covers the speaker: “The loneliness includes me unawares” (emphasis added) (8). In response to the threat of “empty spaces” (emphasis added) (13), the speaker uses stridence in his assertion: “I have it in me so much nearer home / To scare myself with my own desert places” (emphasis added) (15-16). However, stridence is not used as frequently in the last two lines as it is in line 13. Marie Boroff argues that stridence “create[s] a kind of spell, like the soothing repetition of sh-h-h to a wakeful child, promoting the absence of mind in the speaker that makes him more akin to the hibernating animals of the woods than to other human travelers—until he recalls himself from that absence in the last stanza” (139).

Besides the sound communicating Frost’s ideas, the meter he uses also helps communicate the more conversational tone of the speaker’s language. Although the poem eventually follows iambic pentameter, in the beginning, the speaker follows no organized pattern. The first line in particular follows the whim of the speaker rather than an organized pattern: “*Snow falling* and *night falling fast*, oh, *fast*” (emphasis added) (stressed syllables italicized). However, the speaker slowly eases himself into iambic pentameter by the second stanza: The *woods around it have it—it is theirs*” (emphasis added) (5). Frost could be emphasizing the speaker’s thoughts, careful not to make them appear too structured. However, as the speaker focuses on loneliness, the meter correspondingly becomes stricter as if the ideas are overcoming the speaker’s mind. However, although the meter becomes stricter, because iambic pentameter naturally fits the cadence of conversation, Frost does not risk losing the natural, conversational tone of the speaker. Interestingly, Frost adds an extra syllable to three of the four lines in the final stanza: “empty spaces” (emphasis added) (13), “where no human race

*is*” (emphasis added) (14), and “my own desert places” (emphasis added) (16). This technique allows Frost to noticeably end each line with stridence, promoting a hypnotic sound, stressing, with the stream of air produced by stridence, that the desert places will continue to haunt the speaker.

Frost also uses grammatical structures that convince the reader that “Desert Places” is openly communicating the thoughts of the speaker. In the first line, the use of an interjection conveys the attitude of the speaker: “Snow falling and night falling fast, *oh*, fast” (emphasis added). Tom Vander Ven comments specifically on the use of “oh”: “First, as exclamation, it is the commitment of feeling to sound. Second, it is a pure vehicle of feeling, carrying no meaning except that given it by the tone of the speaking voice” (246). Also, examples of first person appear throughout the poem to emphasize the speaker as an individual: “In a field *I* looked into” (emphasis added) (2), “*I* am too absent-spirited to count” (emphasis added) (7), “They cannot scare *me* with their empty spaces” (emphasis added) (13), and “*I* have it in *me* so much nearer home / To scare *myself* with *my* own desert places” (emphasis added) (15-16). Boroff explains that “[t]he word *scare* and the idiom ‘have it in me’ mark the language of the passage with elements of colloquial diction” (139); therefore, as the speaker confesses his personal fears, he communicates them in such a way as if he is speaking to someone rather than relating ideas to an unknown audience. In response to the straightforward language, Arnold G. Bartini argues, “The poem becomes a frank admission of the poet’s inner fear, and this is crystallized in the central image of the snowy field” (353). This personal tone is also evinced through the repetition of words, creating a stream-of-consciousness tone. This occurs in the second stanza: “The woods around it have it—it is theirs” (5). Frost makes use of repetition just as he did in the first line of the first stanza although in this case, the repetition is more obvious since the two uses of “it” are

not separated by other grammatical elements. Although the repeated use of the word “it” can create confusion as to its references, the less cautious way in which Frost uses the pronoun gives the line more of a conversational feel, as if someone is saying the line without realizing its lack of clarity. The reader can perhaps assume that the first “it” refers to the field that the speaker observes while the second “it” could refer to the snow that has been covering the ground. Because the second and third uses of “it” are separated only by a dash and the content of the line is referencing ownership in both clauses, the reader can argue that the pronouns refer to the same thing. The dash acts as a caesura within the line, breaking the steady flow of sound. However, Frost conscientiously created this break, giving the speaker a more conversational tone in that he or she is emphasizing a point by repeating the thought—only with variation.

Contributing to the speaker’s natural, conversational tone of his musings is the repetition of key words with variations in the third stanza:

And *lonely* as it is, that *loneliness*  
 Will be more *lonely* ere it will be less—  
 A blanker whiteness of benighted snow  
 With no *expression*, nothing to *express*. (emphasis added) (9-12)

Besides emphasizing the theme of loneliness, the repetition of words evinces the speaker’s humanity in trying to make sense of his thoughts. Elizabeth Sewell argues that “[r]epetition corresponds with incomprehension” (95). Therefore, the speaker may be rambling aloud to make sense of his thoughts. Although the speaker’s ideas take on the form of complete sentences, they read more like the thoughts of a struggling man who is working through a difficulty. The variations of the word “loneliness” along with the pronouns that reference loneliness emphasize the feelings of the speaker. Thomas and Meriel Bloor explain that “[o]ne important type of

lexical cohesion, probably the one with the strongest cohesive force, is repetition (or reiteration) of the same item” (99). Frost’s many uses of “loneliness” and its variations provide cohesion yet also stress the impact of loneliness on the speaker.

Through its sound, grammatical structures, and content, Frost effectively illustrates the speaker’s confrontation with loneliness as he observes the “snow. . . and night falling” (1). Because Frost uses sounds that promote cohesion yet does not lose the sound of a natural, conversational voice, he effectively shows the struggle of the speaker as an individual. Since the form and content are balanced and united, Frost succeeds in creating a musical poem portraying the haunting fear of the speaker.

Frost’s “Into My Own” (1913) also uses sonorants to achieve musicality through its sound. In particular, nasals, liquids, and glides serve throughout the poem to achieve unity within and between stanzas and to emphasize particular passages.

Although Frost uses nasals throughout the poem, he uses more in line three of the first stanza to emphasize the idea of “the *merest mask* of gloom” (emphasis added) (3). Other examples of nasals remain spaced out until the last stanza in line thirteen, where the speaker claims, “They would *not find me* changed from him they *knew*” (emphasis added), unifying the sound of the line. Frost also uses glides throughout the stanzas; however, they are used most meaningfully in line eight: “Or highway where the *slow wheel* pours the sand” (emphasis added) to emphasize the image that the speaker does not want to find. The *r* sound emphasizes the last line of the poem, drawing attention to the confidence of the speaker: “Only *more sure* of all I thought was true” (emphasis added) (14).

The stops in the second stanza relate to the idea of the speaker “steal[ing] away” (6) to the trees. Line five includes seven stops, but line six includes four, and the number keeps

decreasing as the stanza goes on. After the speaker voices his plan to “steal away” (6), there are fewer and fewer stops; therefore, the lines become smoother as the stops become fewer. The sound of the speaker’s words conveys that his thoughts are focused on escaping to the trees where he longs to be. However, in the third stanza, the speaker thinks of those who would try to prevent him from such an escape, and the number of stops increases, communicating the sound of people attempting to keep him from his escape. Stridence also helps convey Frost’s meaning in lines one and two of the poem, especially the dream-like tone of his wishing to escape: “One of my wishes is that those dark trees, / So old and firm they scarcely *show* the breeze” (emphasis added). Stridence also occurs in line six when the speaker refers to the action of escaping: “Into their vastness I *should* steal away” (emphasis added).

Similar to that of “Desert Places,” the metric pattern of “Into My Own,” although not strictly followed in the beginning, is iambic pentameter. The first line comprises pyrrhic feet; however, by the second line, iambic pentameter is used. Although a few lines are varied from this pattern in that they begin with a stressed syllable, most of the lines follow iambic pentameter. Interestingly, the third stanza, which follows the meter more strictly than the other stanzas, is the stanza containing the most stops. The strict meter helps to soften the more abrupt sounds of the stops. Just as it did in “Desert Places,” this meter supports the more conversational tone of the speaker, supporting the rhythm of the natural fluctuations of the voice.

Frost again uses more conversational language in “Into My Own.” First person is used throughout all of the stanzas, supporting the personal nature of the speaker’s desire. In addition, each stanza begins with the same grammatical structure of subject+verb, with the following lines continuing the idea already begun, each stanza comprising one full sentence. Because each

stanza is a full sentence, the poem is unified grammatically since each stanza has a sense of grammatical unity and every stanza achieves the same level of unity.

Because Frost wrote “Into My Own” as a personal poem describing the speaker’s desire to escape to the “dark trees” (1), conversational language along with sound and rhythm that communicates the personal yet conversational tone is essential. Frost is able to use particular sonorants and obstruents to convey nuances of meaning, yet his tone is not overwhelmed by these techniques. The balance Frost achieves allows the reader to fully acknowledge the various aspects of the poem so that the meaning is even clearer. Therefore, Frost presents the true conversational tone of the speaker without sacrificing sound.

Finally, Frost’s “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” (1923), one of his most popular and most memorized poems, utilizes sound, rhythm, and grammatical structures to present a scene that remains in the minds of readers. Similar to his previous two poems, the majority of sounds in the poem are sonorants to achieve a more song-like quality.

Although particular sonorants do not appear to dominate other sounds in the poem, Frost at times uses particular sonorants to strengthen the meaning of passages. Nasals are used significantly in the second stanza to convey both positive and negative attitudes. First, the speaker, in a light-hearted manner, relates the attitude of his horse: “*My little horse must think it queer / To stop without a farmhouse near*” (emphasis added) (5-6). The *m* sound conveys the speaker’s endearment of his horse as he imagines the horse’s reaction to the pause in their journey. However, the next two lines, using the *n* sound, contrast that positive comment: “*Between the woods and frozen lake / The darkest evening of the year*” (7-8) (emphasis added). The *n* sound, implying a whining tone, reveals that the speaker would much rather stay where he is than move on with his horse.

Another particular sonorant that seems especially meaningful in connection to the text is the glide. In the first stanza, Frost uses several glides to emphasize the woods and the speaker's constant focus on them: "He *w*ill not see me stopping here / To watch his *w*oods fill up with snow" (emphasis added) (3-4). The recurrence of the *w* sound continues steadily into the second stanza; however, the number of *w* sounds steadily decreases throughout the poem until the final stanza, where it is used only one time: "The *w*oods are lovely, dark, and deep" (emphasis added) (13). The decreased use of the *w* sound reflects the speaker's focus shifting from the wintry scene to his "promises" (14) that must be kept.

More consistently used throughout the poem are stops that convey attitudes. In the first stanza, there are very few stops, suggesting that the speaker sees no reason for not stopping to view the snow falling on the woods. However, in the second stanza, stops signal the horse's reaction to the delay of their journey to watch the snow: "My little horse must *st*op without a farmhouse near" (emphasis added) (5-6). This reaction continues into the third stanza: "He gives his harness *st*ops a shake / To ask if there is some mistake" (emphasis added) (9-10). Reacting against the delay in the journey, the horse's motions are communicated through the energetic sounds of stops. However, several stops used in the fourth and fifth stanzas are not as noticeable since they use the *d* sound which is not as abrupt as that of other stops. The speaker relates, "The only other sound's the sweep / Of easy wind and downy flake" (emphasis added) (11-12), the sound of which implies that he is tempted to remain where he is. This idea continues into the next stanza: "The *w*oods are lovely, dark, and deep" (emphasis added) (13). But although the speaker is tempted, he realizes that he must resume his journey because he has "promises to keep" (14), and, accordingly, the stops are softened by the sonorants in the beginning and end of the closing line: "And miles *t*o go before I sleep" (emphasis added) (16).

Fricatives are also used throughout the stanza to correspond to the sounds of the snow and wind. This is especially made apparent by the stridence in the third stanza: “The only other sound’s the sweep / Of easy wind and downy flake” (emphasis added) (11-12). The sound of stridence accurately imitates the sound of the wind’s “sweep” (11) while the consistent appearance of stridence supports a steady rhythm relating to the continuous snowfall.

In addition to the repetition of sounds, Frost uses repetition to close the poem. Based on the speaker’s attitude throughout the poem, the repetition of the last line, “And miles to go before I sleep” (15-16), can be interpreted as the speaker repeating himself to motivate himself to leave the scene before him and finish the task he set out to do. In Frost’s letter to Sylvester Baxter, he explains that “what the repetend” (the repeated line at the end of the poem) “does externally is save [him] from a third line promising another stanza. . . . The repetend was the only logical way to end such a poem” (Townsend and Frost 243). Therefore, the poem ends in a grammatically clear and sensible way.

The meter of “Stopping by Woods” is different from that in “Desert Places” and “Into my Own” because Frost uses a strict pattern of iambic tetrameter. This pattern, with no deviations, is set from the beginning of the poem, contributing to the hypnotic-like effect of the poem when it is read aloud. Along with the strict meter, Frost uses a rhyme scheme of AABA which serves to not only unify each stanza but also maintain a sense of control that adds to the poem’s unity of sound.

The language of the poem is similar to that of “Desert Places” and “Into My Own” because almost all of the grammatical structures are simple in form and the language is conversational. Norman Holland explains how Frost “used the language and materials of small New England farms to grasp the largest issues human beings can face. That is, he used folksy

language to talk about big themes, small knowns to manage big unknowns” (367). Although Frost sometimes begins a poem with a line that does not follow the set pattern established by the end of the first stanza, in this poem, he begins with a grammatical structure not often used in everyday conversation. The first line, “Whose woods these are I think I know,” is an inverted structure as opposed to “I think I know whose woods these are.” Besides using an inverted sentence to emphasize *woods*, Frost places *woods* near the beginning of the sentence as the first stressed syllable of the poem to immediately reiterate the significant role of the woods. However, for the duration of the poem, Frost uses language and grammatical structures common to everyday speech. While Frost may at times deviate from conversational grammatical structures, because the words of those structures still maintain a conversational tone, Frost can use uncommon grammatical structures without destroying a poem’s unified conversational tone.

Frost sought to use the language of the ordinary man but in such a way as to communicate beauty and depth of meaning in his poetry. Although the language he uses appears simple and easy to understand, Frost challenges the reader with the themes of his poetry. By observing the patterns and sounds created by Frost’s words, the reader can fully understand the unified beauty of Frost’s poetry and appreciate the music that he creates through language. Mohan Singh Karki comments that Frost’s “blending of dramatic tone and more regular melody—a fusion of speech and song—is the fulfillment of his coined compound ‘talk-song’” (95). While Frost succeeded in a balanced combination of speech and song, he understood the difficulty behind achieving such cohesion. Thompson explains, “To him, the mystery, the wonder, the virtue, the magic of poetry is its heterogeneity of elements somehow blended to a single autonomous unit” (18). Frost was able to achieve this “magic” by carefully choosing words that people used and then crafting them to produce something unified yet significant in

theme. The music of the human voice is never more truthfully presented than in the poetry of Robert Frost.

Edna St. Vincent Millay:

Musical Identities: To Each His Own

Harriet Monroe asserts that “[o]ne would have to go back a long way in literary history to find a young lyric poet singing so freely and musically in such a big world” (33). This description of Edna St. Vincent Millay is not, however, one that has been popular during the span of her career. J.D. McClatchy reminds modern readers that “[i]n their day, of course, her poems startled readers with their edgy candor, their fearless passion, their silvery structures” (xix), a description acknowledging the resonance of Millay’s poetry. Although the subject matter of her poetry did not impress those who were more concerned with the intellectual aspect of poetry, Millay, in communicating her emotional impulses, allowed her musical sensibilities to shape and structure her words. McClatchy maintains that “the best of her poems have the delicate complexities of a score, harmonic progressions and crucial motifs” (xxix-xxx). These musical elements serve to not only draw in the reader but to clearly communicate her thoughts, establishing a sense of unity within her poems.

Millay’s poem “A Visit to the Asylum” (1917) narrates the experience of a young, naïve girl enjoying her interactions with people in an asylum. Conveying the innocent, pleasant tone of the young girl, Millay uses an abundance of sonorants in “A Visit to the Asylum,” achieving a song-like quality with energetic, staccato-like effects from the obstruents scattered throughout the lines. Although many of the obstruents occur on stressed syllables, because the obstruents are not uniformly spaced out, each line achieves its own unique rhythm, and the poem produces a more conversational tone, which is spontaneous yet controlled; thus, through use of sound grammatical structures that relate to the poem’s content, Millay faithfully presents the young girl’s account of her experience.

Millay uses a wide variety of sonorants, not relying too heavily on any particular type. However, she repeats particular sonorants within the lines and stanzas to promote unity. Nasals are used throughout the poem, usually occurring at least twice per line. Lines five and six, grammatically already flowing together, are unified in sound because of the nasals: “*And in the hard wee gardens / Such pleasant men would hoe*” (emphasis added). However, although the regular occurrence of the *n* sound in these lines causes them to flow smoothly, Millay could be emphasizing the negative environment of the asylum where inmates worked in “hard wee gardens” (5). This negative connotation of the *n* sound is further supported later in the poem where the windows separating those in the asylum from people without are emphasized:

There were a thousand windows,  
 All latticed up and down.  
 And up to all the windows,  
 When we went back to town. (emphasis added) (17-20)

While the *n* sound communicates the negative aspects of the asylum, Millay uses the *m* sound to communicate the speaker’s pleasure in her visit: “*No matter where we went, / The merriest eyes would follow me / And make me compliment*” (emphasis added) (14-16). Liquids promote a unified sound in line four: “*Would smile at me and call*” (emphasis added), highlighting the actions of the “queer folk.” Additionally, the repetitive *r* in the third stanza emphasizes all that the “queer folk” would do for the speaker:

They cut me coloured asters  
 With shears so sharp and neat,  
 They brought me grapes and plums and pears  
 And pretty cakes to eat. (emphasis added) (9-12)

Glides also appear throughout the poem, especially in the first two stanzas. The speaker, beginning with the word “once” (1), implies a fairy tale-like tone similar to “[o]nce upon a time.” This tone continues through the first two stanzas, suggesting that the speaker looks pleasantly on the memory. Vowels are used more frequently than any other sonorant; however, their particular sounds are not used repetitively as the other sonorants are. Millay uses a variety of vowel frequencies that suggests the speaker’s casual and innocent rather than overly emotional response to the asylum. Although Millay uses mid-frequency vowels more than high or low-frequency vowels, she does not allow the repetition of particular vowel frequencies to control the poem’s sound and thereby successfully emphasizes a story told by a carefree girl rather than a dominant emotion from her experience.

The obstruents of the poem add more to the rhythm of the lines. Millay uses stops to produce staccato-like effects, but these effects never become repetitive because of their positional placement. Although in the first stanza, Millay varies the stops by using six in the first line and none in the second, throughout the rest of the poem, the positions of the stops vary. For instance, in line five, stops occur on the first unstressed syllable, the second stressed syllable, and on the last stressed and unstressed syllables while in line six, stops occur on the first stressed syllable, the second unstressed syllable, and the last unstressed syllable. Therefore, the placement of the stops in the sixth line is nearly the opposite of their placement in the fifth line. Another example of this is found in lines nineteen and twenty. In line nineteen, nearly all the stops are in the first half of the line whereas in line twenty, nearly all the stops are toward the end of the line. By varying the occurrence and patterns of stops, Millay avoids a repetitive and monotonous staccato sound and instead creates an energetic sound which corresponds to the character of the speaker in how she approaches the asylum and its occupants.

Millay also uses fricatives to unify the speaker's tone and the text. In the first stanza, stridence is used to unify the stanza and support the fairy tale-like opening by evincing a dream-like sound. Although the repetition of "small" (2) heightens the effect of stridence, Millay limits stridence from overtaking the tone of the stanza since stridence is not used a great deal in many of the stanzas. In the third stanza, Millay relies more on stridence to convey the attitude of the speaker:

They cut me coloured asters  
 With *shears so sharp* and neat,  
 They brought me grapes and plums and pears  
 And pretty cakes to eat. (emphasis added) (9-12)

Although Millay uses a variety of strident sounds (*s*, *z*, *sh*), the *s* sounds in the last two lines emphasize all the gifts those in the asylum gave the young girl, details that would naturally be exciting for a young girl to share. Therefore, the sound of the little girl's speech in this stanza implies that she has mentally reverted to the past and is excitedly describing her experience at the asylum. Because the stridence is varied throughout the stanza and because stridence is not heavily depended on in other stanzas, Millay maintains the spontaneous nature of the young girl's narration.

In addition to the sound of the poem producing a more conversational, carefree tone, the meter also supports the conversational tone. Millay uses iambic feet (sometimes with variation) in the poem to communicate a conversational tone. She varies noticeably from the iambic pattern in the first and last stanzas. In the first stanza, the speaker uses repetition in the first line which results in a stressed syllable following another stressed syllable: "Once from a *big, big* building, / When I was *small, small*" (emphasis added) (1-2). This calls even more attention to the

repetition, emphasizing the speaker's perspective as a child, setting the tone for the poem. Millay also uses a stressed syllable in the beginning of a line to draw attention to the dialogue: "*Come* again, little girl! They called, and I / Called back, 'You *come see me!*'" (emphasis added) (23-24). These two lines conclude the poem, joining the perspective of those in the asylum and the little girl and illustrating the innocent and endearing attributes of the speaker.

To counteract the repetitive sound of iambic feet throughout the poem, Millay varies the lengths of the lines. The lines usually comprise between three and four iambic feet, but Millay consistently adds or takes away a syllable so that many lines comprise 2 ½ or 3 ½ iambic feet. This gives the lines a sense of incompleteness that propels the reader to the following line. However, the first line of each stanza contains 3 ½ iambic feet while the last line of each stanza contains 3 iambic feet; therefore, while more variation occurs in the middle lines of each stanza, the opening and closing lines help to unify each stanza and connect stanzas to one another. The third line of each stanza is the longest, and these lines focus on the actions and dialogue of those in the asylum. In the third stanza, Millay dwells on what those in the asylum do for the speaker: "They brought me grapes and plums and pears" (11), the longer length of the line emphasizing even more all that is given to the speaker. In addition, the third line of the final stanza, which demonstrates the relationship between the girl and those in the asylum, is the longest line of the poem, seeming almost awkward in comparison to the three-foot lines surrounding it. However, Millay uses this line to heighten the effect of the conclusion of the poem: "'Come again, little girl!' they called, and I / Called back, 'You come see me!'" (23-24).

Because Millay uses much variation in the length of lines, she uses a stricter rhyme scheme throughout the poem to maintain a balance between repetition and variation. The first four stanzas follow an ABCB rhyme scheme; however, the fifth stanza follows an ABAB rhyme

scheme. In this stanza, the speaker focuses on the number of windows on the building. Reflecting a sense of order, the rhyme scheme becomes less varied with the repetition of “windows” (lines 17, 19) and the rhyme of “down” (18) and “town” (20). In the final stanza, though, Millay returns to the pattern of ABCB to establish a sense of finality and unity.

The grammatical aspect of the poem also corresponds to the speaker of the poem since the language and structures are conversational. However, the grammatical structures vary throughout the poem since Millay uses different grammatical functions in the beginning of each line. She also varies the grammatical structure of whole stanzas. While the first four stanzas each contain one full sentence, the fifth stanza comprises a sentence with the first two lines. The sentence begun in line nineteen is then not completed until the very end of the poem. Because the fifth stanza differs from the preceding four, it leads into the final stanza and is incomplete until the last stanza is read. Therefore, Millay is, with the sentence structure of the stanza, preparing the reader for the conclusion of the poem.

By using sound, rhythm, and grammatical structures that correspond to the verbal content of the poem, Millay effectively illustrates the attitude of the speaker and her relationship with those in the asylum. Rather than being overly dramatic with one aspect of the poem, Millay combines subtle hints in all the aspects of the poem to produce a realistic illustration of a child’s experience. Because she does this, Millay creates a musical, unified poem that connects to the reader.

In Millay’s “Bluebeard” (1917), proclaimed by Daniel Mark Epstein as one of the “most important of [her] early sonnets, and surely the most famous (the only one she honored with a title)” (109), the speaker responds quite angrily to a serious intrusion. However, while the nuances of anger are represented, they are also controlled by patterns of sound and structure so

that the content does not intrude upon or act outside of the musicality of the poem. Therefore, Millay succeeds in balancing form and content, yet the poem speaks as a whole because the sound and rhythm merge with the verbal content.

Millay once again uses a variety of sonorants throughout the poem. Nasals are one of the sonorants used the most in the poem. Besides helping the poem to sound unified as a whole, nasals connect corresponding ideas. Millay uses nasals to emphasize what the person addressed does not find in the room (3-6). She also uses a significant number of nasals in line eight: “*An empty room, cobwebbed and comfortless*” (emphasis added) to unify the line and heighten the effect of the dreary description.

In addition, liquids are used to emphasize the climax of the octet (3-6). After the person addressed has entered the room, the speaker responds in anger to the unwelcome entrance and contrasts what the intruder expected to find with what the room does contain. The liquids, in addition to the nasals, unify these lines in sound so that they stand out in relation to the lines preceding and following them. The glides then remain spaced out, positioned in a variety of ways among the lines to avoid an overly repetitive sound. In addition, the vowels, in a range of frequencies, are varied throughout the poem, avoiding an overt adherence to one specific emotion. Instead, the speaker seems more spontaneous in her musings.

Millay also uses a number of stops and fricatives to indicate the speaker’s fluctuation of emotions and energy levels throughout the poem. Similarly to “A Visit to the Asylum,” Millay uses stops to illustrate the energy behind the speaker’s anger as he confronts his intruder. Stops are used rather frequently in the octet where the speaker reacts in anger to the intruder. However, in the sestet, fewer stops are used, implying the resignation of the speaker to never again see the intruder and to move on to where he will not be forced into revealing what he does not wish to

reveal. Although the emotion of the speaker in the first part of the poem is more dependent on the sounds of the stops, by the last three lines, Millay depends more on fricatives than on stops to communicate the tension of the speaker. Because the speaker is becoming more resigned to his solution, fricatives communicate the sound of tension without being as energetic sounding as stops. Therefore, the reliance on fricatives at the end of the poem effectively communicates the emotional state of the speaker.

Millay uses iambic pentameter in this poem, creating a more naturally conversational tone which corresponds to the speaker's brutal honesty. Variations to the iambic pentameter occur in the lines in which the speaker reacts with anger. In line four, "No *cauldron*, no *clear crystal* mirroring" (emphasis added), Millay follows the iambic pattern in only two of the five feet. With this variation, Millay can stress "*cauldron*" (emphasis added) and "*clear crystal*" (emphasis added), emphasizing the harsh initial attack of the stops. This also occurs in line eight, where Millay emphasizes "*cobwebbed* (emphasis added)" and "*comfortless*" (emphasis added). To keep the emphasis on these lines, Millay follows iambic pentameter in the rest of the poem.

Although Millay uses many techniques to emphasize the speaker's emotion, she maintains a strict sonnet form throughout the poem with an ABAB CDCD EFEF GG rhyme scheme. This organization allows Millay to keep the speaker's emotions controlled and perhaps restrained so that the speaker does not reveal more than he already has had to reveal. Millay's grammatical structure corresponds to the sonnet form since the octet comprises one complete sentence. However, to stress the resignation of the speaker, the sestet is composed of three sentences. The speaker is determined to not see the intruder again (13). Then he gives up his room (14). And finally, the speaker is determined to find a new room that has not been intruded upon (14). This grammatical structuring contrasts that of the previous lines of the poem.

Although Millay used semicolons or colons at the ends of lines, she never used a full sentence. Additionally, these three sentences occur close together; therefore, the reader notices that Millay seeks to communicate a sense of finality with each sentence, implying that the speaker must accept what has occurred and move on. According to Jane Stanbrough, “Through [the sonnet], Millay imaginatively reenacts her constant struggle against boundaries. The wish for freedom is always qualified by the sense of restriction; couplets and quatrains suit her sensibility” (198). Therefore, while the speaker is angry, his emotions are controlled by the language forced upon him by the form of the sonnet.

By combining aspects of sound, grammatical structure, and verbal content, Millay communicates the speaker’s invasion of privacy and his angry reaction to it. According to Epstein, Millay “has cast herself in the role of Bluebeard, but this is a Bluebeard the likes of which the world has never known, a detached, nonviolent, swordless pirate. His strongest sentiment is his desire for privacy, and next to that is his lofty contempt for the traitor who has invaded it” (109). Because the reader can sense the speaker’s anger not only by the verbal content but by the sound and grammatical structures of the poem, Millay has used musical elements in the sound of the poem along with the unity between the language and sound to craft a musical poem.

Millay’s “The Leaf and the Tree” (1934) is a personal, reflective poem since the speaker questions himself, looking to nature’s illustrations of time to understand what his attitude toward life and its temporality should be. By the end of the poem, the speaker realizes and accepts the universality of death. Because the poem marks the progression of the speaker from his initial questioning to a state of acceptance, the sound of the poem, too, should reflect the speaker’s

progression. Through sound and tone, Millay evinces musical effects that merge with the speaker's meditations to create a musical whole.

Millay uses nasals to unify descriptions in lines and between lines. Most of the nasals used are the *n* sound; therefore, they convey a negative tone that corresponds to the idea of death. In the first stanza, the speaker uses nasals to describe the "living tree" as "[b]udding, swelling, growing strong, / Wearing green, but not for long, Drawing sustenance from air" (emphasis added) (3-5). In line ten, Millay uses nasals to unify adjectives: "Ungessed by small and tremulous you" (emphasis added). In line thirteen, Millay unifies the phrase "lightning plunging by" (emphasis added) to emphasize actions against the tree. Additionally, lines nineteen and twenty, which describe the tree, are unified with nasals: "Makes firm its root and spreads its crown / And stands ; but in the end comes down" (emphasis added). The contrast of the tree standing and then it falling down is emphasized since both ideas sound similar because of the nasals.

Millay also uses liquids to help unify the sounds of words that combine to form single ideas. First, the *l* sounds illustrate a connection between the speaker and his desire to change perspectives: "When will you learn, my self to be / A dying leaf on a living tree" (emphasis added) (lines 1-2). In addition, the *r* sounds in the next two lines help unify the adjectives describing the tree: ". . . growing strong, / Wearing green, but not for long" (emphasis added) (3-4). The *r* sound is also used to unify and emphasize descriptive lines such as those in line eight: "Wearing russet, ready to fall?" (emphasis added) and in line nineteen: "Makes firm its root and spreads its crown" (emphasis added). The smooth sound of the conclusion corresponds to the speaker's acceptance of death since the speaker pictures how "The tallest trunk that ever stood, / In time, without a dream to keep, / Crawls in beside the root to sleep" (28-30). The comparison

of death to sleep implies that the speaker is not afraid of or resistant to death; rather, it is a natural, universal occurrence. However, the reader should remember as Miriam Gurko argues that “despite [Millay’s] more thoughtful considerations of death, the inevitability of dying in no way diminishes the preciousness of life” (204). The speaker can praise the strength of the tree yet still accept its death.

The frequency of vowels in the poem is varied, corresponding to the personal nature and, therefore, more conversational tone implied. Besides their use for the rhyme at the ends of pairs of lines, the vowels also suggest a tone of resignation. The speaker describes the tree as it “[m]akes firm its root and spreads its crown / And stands; but in the end comes down” (19-20). Line twenty contains almost all mid-frequency vowels and then ends with a low-frequency vowel. This monotonous sound corresponds to line twenty-two as well, where, because of the boy climbing the tree, it “[i]s trodden in a little time.” Most of the syllables in this line are also mid-frequency vowels, and the monotonous sounds they produce correspond to the somber concept of death. Millay then uses vowels to not only convey a conversational tone but to illustrate the particular theme of her poem.

Millay uses obstruents not only to vary the rhythm by their placement but also to emphasize the strength of the tree while it lives, and its death after its decline. Stops are used in the first stanza in various positions to give the words a more energetic sound but also to emphasize more positive, energetic words such as “budding,” “growing,” “strong” (3), “green” (4), “drawing” (5), “bud” (7), and “ready” (8). Stops occur more frequently when the strength of the tree is described. This occurs in the second stanza: “*To glimpse a tree so tall and proud*” (emphasis added) (15), in the third stanza: “*Makes firm its root and spreads its crown / And*

*stands; but in the end comes down*” (emphasis added) (19-20), and in the final stanza: “*The tallest trunk that ever stood*” (emphasis added) (28).

The fricatives seem to work with the stops to maintain a sense of tension throughout the poem. In lines where there are not many stops, fricatives are used to avoid an overly smooth sound since the poem focuses on the strength of the tree and its decline resulting from its environment. Fricatives are significant in lines six, eleven, and seventeen, where there are fewer stops to illustrate the difficulties the tree faces. Therefore, fricatives, in the absence of stops, create the tense sound necessary to the content of the poem.

Stridence in particular encourages unity within the poem. In lines nine and ten, the speaker implies that he or she does not fully understand the purpose of the tree: “*Has not this trunk a deed to do / Unguessed by small and tremulous you?*” (emphasis added). The stridence, made more obvious in its combination with repetitive, mid-frequency vowels, produces a hissing sound which corresponds to the speaker’s frustration with himself for not having already understood the significance of the life of the tree before its death. Stridence also encourages unity in lines nineteen and twenty, where the tree is described: “*Makes firm its root and spreads its crown / And stands; but in the end comes down*” (emphasis added). The stridence emphasizes the contrast between “stands” and “comes down” (20). Stridence is again used in the last stanza as the speaker accepts the finality of the tree as it “[c]rawls in beside the root to sleep” (emphasis added) (30). Therefore, Millay’s use of stridence is significant in several ways because it supports the tone of the verbal content.

Although the metric pattern of the poem is iambic tetrameter, in some stanzas, the metric pattern varies, calling attention to their content. In the first stanza, the participles of lines 3-5 and 6 all begin with accented syllables and continue in that pattern throughout the lines. These

descriptive lines emphasize the speaker's questions of why he is not similar to the "dying leaf on a living tree" (2). This pattern is not again seen until the speaker has discovered the answer to his question: "Here, I think, is the heart's grief" (17). Therefore, Millay emphasizes the initial question and the initial answer to the speaker's question by varying the metric pattern.

Through the grammatical structures used in the poem, Millay divides the poem into two parts—the first being the speaker's questions comprising the first two stanzas, and the second being the answers to the speaker's questions. From the very beginning, the speaker appears to be musing aloud, evinced by the direct address in the first line: "When will you learn, *my self*. . ." (emphasis added). In addition, grammatical parallelism of participles is used to emphasize the active nature of the tree "[b]udding, swelling, growing strong" (3). As the speaker searches for answers and ponders the life process of the tree, he emphasizes verbs and adjectives to describe the height and decline of the tree's life. The second stanza asserts that the tree is "*tall and proud*" (emphasis added) (15) with a trunk that has "a deed to *do*" (emphasis added) (9), and "branches" (11) that will "To wisdom and the truth *ascend*" (emphasis added) (12). Moreover, the third stanza indicates that the tree "*Makes firm* its root and *spreads* its crown / And *stands*; but in the end *comes down*" (emphasis added) (19-20). In the final stanza, by using a simple grammatical structure, the speaker is straightforward about the effect of time: "Time can make soft that iron wood" (27). The last three lines, although grammatically more interesting in structure, maintain the finalized tone of the speaker, stating that the "tallest trunk" (28) will still "sleep" (30) in the end.

Millay's "The Leaf and the Tree" is a personal poem evinced through the sincere voice of the speaker, but it is a poem that dwells on a theme that connects to all readers. The speaker's progression, from questioning his own perspective to looking to nature to solidify the

purposefulness of life even though life itself ends, challenges the reader to reflect as well.

Although the theme of the poem is intense, Millay's language clarifies and simplifies it with a logical continuity from asking questions to making assertions based on an observation in nature and with particular sounds that emphasize the energy of life and the acceptance of death. These layers of language and their connections to meaning not only evince a pleasing sound but also compose a musical poem that can affect readers to contemplate the same ideas on their own.

The poems "Visit to the Asylum," "Bluebeard," and "The Leaf and the Tree" dwell on a variety of themes; however, in each of them, Millay's voice is clearly heard, an evidence of her versatility as a poet. While these poems are of a personal nature, in them, Millay becomes a naïve little girl, an angered person whose privacy has been invaded, and a meditative individual who wants to reassure himself of the value of life; yet more importantly, she becomes these identities completely, adopting their nuances and revealing them through sound and structure. Although Millay struggled to become an accepted and popular poet, she was able to create her own musical language that still leaves an impression on those who read her poetry. In a letter to Allan Ross Macdougall, Millay, claiming her dependence on music, confessed, "Indeed, without music I should wish to die" (qtd. in Macdougall 101). While Millay's poetry may not be given the attention it deserves, the musicality of her language reveals not only her love for music but a love for the music that quickens language in the minds of readers.

### Conclusion: Reflections on the Musicality of American Poetry

Longfellow, Poe, Frost, and Millay are four distinct poets; however, some of their tendencies in writing poetry overlap. Longfellow often uses mid-vowel frequencies, stridence, and assonance to promote a hypnotic effect. Poe, similarly to Longfellow, conveys the same effect through stridence and assonance; however, Poe also uses alliteration of fricatives with the same purpose. Frost, like both Longfellow and Poe, employs stridence to convey a dream-like tone. Although Millay's poetry does compare to that of Longfellow and Poe since some of her lines are monotonous, usually, Millay, much like Frost, uses a variety of vowel frequencies, adding to the conversational tone of her language.

While Poe tends to abruptly deviate from metric patterns, Longfellow, Millay, and Frost tend to stay within a particular metric framework. Poe uses rather spontaneous metric and rhythmic patterns to communicate the mental instability of the speaker. On the other hand, Longfellow employs rhythmically playful patterns that cause the speed of his poetry to fluctuate and create vivid images in the reader's mind, but he does not allow his poetry to disrupt its metric framework. In the same way, Frost and Millay tend to keep their poems within a particular metric scheme although the strict meter is not as noticeable in their poetry since the conversational tone they use causes the poetry to not sound as strictly patterned as Longfellow's poetry.

Although all four poets utilize verbal repetition, they use repetition to various extents and for various reasons. Poe uses much verbal repetition, through which he communicates the mental instability of his speakers. Longfellow, however, uses repetition to achieve a song-like effect, such as the refrain of "My Lost Youth" and does not depend on repetition to deepen the reader's understanding of his speakers. Although Frost, like Poe, uses verbal repetition to reveal the

thoughts of his speakers, they are not mentally unstable. Rather, the repetition reflects what people would consider normal reactions to circumstances. Millay uses verbal repetition in the same way, conveying the thoughts of speakers such as the innocent, young girl in “A Visit to the Asylum.”

One characteristic that sets Frost and Millay apart from both Longfellow and Poe is their conversational tone. In many poems, Frost uses first person, which, along with the themes of his poetry, reveals the personal tone that imitates in everyday language the thoughts of a speaker. Millay’s poetry is similar to that of Frost not only because they are both modern poets, but also because they both convey a personal tone through their poetry. Millay uses a conversational tone in her poetry by employing language that is spontaneous but also controlled by its form. Longfellow and Poe, on the other hand, prefer an approach to language that is more formal since they do not write in a conversational tone.

Longfellow, Poe, Frost, and Millay employ some of the same techniques in their approach to writing poetry, but they inarguably remain four distinct American poets who use a variety of elements to communicate a variety of thematic content. Their individual talents in the writing of poetry merge to form one trait that they all share—the ability to balance repetition and variation. Similar to a musical composition, poetry must include repetition—whether achieved through alliteration, repetition of words, grammatical structures, or other elements. Without repetition, a poem cannot act as its own entity; rather, it communicates nothing but various details with no common thread and, therefore, becomes purposeless to the reader. However, the other extreme, involving too much dependence on repetition, unless it is used to convey an unstable speaker such as that of “Annabel Lee,” fails to accurately communicate significant meaning in form as it corresponds to content. In contrast, poetry with a proper balance of

repetition and variation not only conveys a sense of unity but also reveals nuances heightening the impact of poetry on the reader. Because Longfellow, Poe, Frost, and Millay recognized the importance of balancing repetition and variation and then applied that knowledge to the crafting of their poetry, they were able to produce works that, in the same way as musical compositions, act as their own entities, communicating significant meaning while connecting to the reader.

The incredibly personal nature of the writing of poetry ensures that every poem possesses its own essence as an artistic work. Therefore, critically approaching a poem involves caution on the part of readers and critics since they may be tempted to defend or oppose the artistic merit of a poem, depending on how the beliefs and perspectives conveyed through the poem correspond to their own. Although readers and critics cannot and should not disengage themselves from the text, they can read and critically approach poetry fairly, even if its themes, philosophy, or religious motives do not appeal to their individual tastes. Differences of taste may promote discussions among readers and scholars, but they need not be factors in determining a poem's artistic quality. Rather than promoting their personal agendas in light of the influence of Marxism, readers and critics should not lose sight of the text. Doing so limits a focus on not only the words themselves, but the linguistic nuances integrated into the text. Without studying these nuances, readers and critics cannot perform an exhaustive analysis of a poem, and, subsequently, their conclusions will not be representative of the artistic value of a poem. Therefore, a new process of critical analysis ought to be applied to poetry to combat approaches which would deem significant aspects of the text unnecessary in the study of poetry.

As demonstrated in the analyses of poetry written by four American poets, the process of analyzing the sounds, rhythms, and grammatical structures of poetry and how they correspond to verbal content presents a means to understanding the multi-faceted nature of poetry. This process

may seem contrary to the process of writing a poem since a poet does not necessarily consciously focus on sounds, then rhythm, and then grammatical structures as he is writing a poem. Good poetry is considered good poetry because it cannot be paraphrased, but understanding why a good poem cannot be paraphrased into a better poem involves attention to and analysis of each dimension. Rather than tearing apart a good poem, this process serves to support and strengthen the argument for the poem's artistic goodness.

Although studying how the dimensions of poetry work together is essential for readers and critics to fully understand poetry, of greater significance is the whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. Many poems, as noted in this study, use musical elements apparent in sound and rhythm; however, more central to the analysis of poetry is that each poem is its own entity. While a poem is not a song, because poetry shares attributes with music which are displayed in alliteration, assonance, rhythmic patterns, and other devices, the two genres can be analyzed similarly. In addition, good music comprises elements of sound and rhythm that coincide to produce a unified, artistic whole; and good poetry comprises elements of sound, rhythm, and text that coincide to produce a unified, artistic whole. Attaining the sense of the whole is the goal of the poet who aims to produce good poetry that communicates through every dimension.

Although the poetry of Longfellow, Poe, Frost, and Millay elicits a wide variety of negative and positive responses supported by varying levels of objectivity, a more concrete approach can be used to determine if these American poets wrote good poetry. Forgetting about one's preferences for uplifting or starkly realistic poetry, poetry concerning the author's life, poetry in a more conversational style, or poetry that aims to entertain, readers and critics should adopt tools of analysis which aid in an unbiased approach to poetry. Whether or not one wants to know about the struggles Longfellow depicts is not the central issue; instead, what is central is

the manner in which Longfellow portrays struggles. Without this distinction between preference and art, readers and critics cannot approach poetry and make assertions based on how the poet mastered or failed to master his craft.

Although the analytical process has been applied to only four American poets, this process can be applied to all poetry because it allows for the individuality of each poem. Since the focus is on the merging of dimensions rather than exactly how those dimensions should be utilized, this process is an unbiased approach to poetry. If applied to poetry in the future, this process can not only aid in the teaching of poetry but also justify and encourage analysis of poetry in the present. If readers can more easily understand the meaning of poetry through this process, they may be more apt to further their study of the genre. In addition, critics using this process can make arguments that are founded upon the text rather than their own tastes. In addition, this study presents an opportunity for literature besides poetry to be analyzed in the same manner. While poetry is perhaps a genre more relatable to this study since its sound is significant in how meaning is revealed, other imaginative literature such as creative fiction can utilize a form similar to that of poetry. Therefore, using the same process with imaginative literature can make readers aware of significant sounds and structures that relate to, add to, or strengthen the content.

The current generation is not comprised of avid readers. While critics bemoan the lack of interest in literature, they perhaps do not work diligently to reverse the trend. If a poem has no significant meaning to be gleaned from the text itself, for many, understandably, it is not worth reading. Poetry, even more than other genres, is a genre of literature that instills fear in students. To them, it is a foreign language that has no logic—only mystery. This myth will not be banished by readers and critics who derive meaning from their own insights. Rather, a stronger

emphasis on the concrete will encourage students to become readers of a genre comprising some of the most beautiful music ever written.

## Works Cited

- Arvin, Newton. "Early Longfellow." *Massachusetts Review* 3.1 (Autumn 1961): 145-57. *JSTOR*.  
Web. 11 Apr. 2011.
- . *Longfellow: His Life and Work*. Boston: Little, 1963. Print.
- Bartini, Arnold G. "Whiteness in Robert Frost's Poetry." *Massachusetts Review* 26.213  
(Summer-Autumn 1985): 351-56. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Dec. 2010.
- Bernstein, Leonard. *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard*. Cambridge: Harvard UP,  
1976. Print.
- Blackmur, Richard P. *Form and Value in Modern Poetry*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957.  
Print.
- Bloor, Thomas and Meriel. *The Functional Analysis of Language: A Hallidayan Approach*. 2nd  
ed. London: Arnold, 2004. Print.
- Boroff, Marie. "Sound Symbolism as Drama in the Poetry of Robert Frost." *PMLA* 107.1 (Jan.  
1992): 131-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2010.
- Brown, Calvin S. *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts*. Athens: U of Georgia P,  
1948. Print.
- Calhoun, Charles C. *Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life*. Boston: Beacon, 2004. Print.
- Copland, Aaron. *What to Listen for in Music*. New York: McGraw, 1957. Print.
- Davidson, Edward H. *Poe: A Critical Study*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1957. Print.
- Eliot, T.S. *The Music of Poetry*. Glasgow: Jackson, 1942. Print.
- Epstein, Daniel Mark. *What Lips My Lips Have Kissed: The Loves and Love Poems of Edna St.  
Vincent Millay*. New York: Holt, 2002. Print.

- Fletcher, Richard M. *The Stylistic Development of Edgar Poe*. The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1973. Print.
- Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams. *An Introduction to Language*. 8th ed. Boston: Thomson, 2007. Print.
- Frost, Robert. "Desert Places." *The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Complete Poems, Complete and Unabridged*. Ed. Edward Connery Lathem. New York: Holt, 1979. 296. Print.
- . "Into My Own." Lathem. 5. Print.
- . "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." Lathem. 224-25. Print.
- Goodman, Nelson. *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968. Print.
- Gross, Harvey. *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry: A Study of Prosody from Thomas Hardy to Robert Lowell*. 3rd ed. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1965. Print.
- Gurko, Miriam. *Restless Spirit: The Life of Edna St. Vincent Millay*. New York: Crowell, 1962. Print.
- Holland, Norman N. "The Brain of Robert Frost." *New Literary History* 15.2 (Winter 1984): 365-85. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Dec. 2010.
- Karki, Mohan Singh. *Robert Frost: Theory & Practice of the Colloquial and Sound of Sense*. Granthayan, India: Navyug, 1979. Print.
- Ladefoged, Peter, and Ian Maddieson. *The Sounds of the World's Languages*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996. Print.
- Ladefoged, Peter. *Vowels and Consonants*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. Print.
- Lanier, Sidney. *Music and Poetry: Essays upon Some Aspects and Inter-Relations of the Two Arts*. 2nd ed. New York: AMS, 1969. Print.

Leech, Geoffrey N. *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. London: Longmans, 1969. Print.

Levi, Peter. *The Noise Made by Poems*. London: Anvil, 1977. Print.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *The Poetical Works of Longfellow*. Ed. H.E. Scudder.

Cambridge ed. Boston: Houghton, 1975. Print.

---. "The Day Is Done." Scudder. 64-65. Print.

---. "Mezzo Cammin." Scudder. 68-69. Print.

---. "My Lost Youth." Scudder. 193-95. Print.

Macdougall, Allan Ross, ed. *Letters of St. Vincent Millay*. New York: Harper, 1952. Print.

Mason, David, and John Frederick Nims. *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry*. 5th ed.

Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006. Print.

McClatchy, J.D., ed. *Edna St. Vincent Millay: Selected Poems*. New York: Library of America,

2003. Print.

Millay, Edna St. Vincent. *Collected Poems: Edna St. Vincent Millay*. Ed. Norma Millay. New

York: Harper, 1956. Print.

---. "Bluebeard." Millay. 566. Print.

---. "The Leaf and the Tree." Millay. 298-99. Print.

---. "A Visit to the Asylum." Millay. 166-67. Print.

Monroe, Harriet. "First Books of Verse." *Critical Essays on Edna St. Vincent Millay*. Ed.

William B. Thesing. New York: Hall, 1993. 33-34. Print.

O'Neill, Eugene. *Imagery in the Poetry of Longfellow*. Diss. Columbia U, 1955. Print.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "Annabel Lee." *Edgar Allan Poe: Complete Poems*. Ed. Thomas Ollive

Mabbott. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000. 477-79. Print.

---. "To Helen." Mabbott. 165-66. Print.

- . "The Philosophy of Composition." *Complete Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*. Ed. Louis Untermeyer. New York: Heritage, 1943. 205-14. Print.
- . "The Raven." Mabbott. 355-70. Print.
- Richard, Claude. "The Heart of Poe and the Rhythmics of Poetry." Rpt. in *Critical Essays on Edgar Allan Poe*. Ed. Eric W. Carlson. New York: Hall, 1987. 195-206. Print.
- Sewell, Elizabeth. *The Structure of Poetry*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962. Print.
- Schlauch, Margaret. *Modern English and American Poetry: Techniques and Ideologies*. London: Watts, 1956. Print.
- Shepard, Odell. Introduction. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Representative Selections*. By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. New York: American Book, 1934. xliii. Print.
- Stanbrough, Jane. "Edna St. Vincent Millay and the Language of Vulnerability." *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*. Ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979. 183-99. Print.
- Tate, Allen. "The Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe." *Sewanee Review* 76.2 (1968): 214-25. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Sept. 2010.
- Thompson, Lawrance. "Robert Frost's Theory of Poetry." *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. James M. Cox. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice, 1962. 16-35. Print.
- Townsend, R.C., and Robert Frost. "In Defense of Form: A Letter from Robert Frost to Sylvester Baxter, 1923." *New England Quarterly* 36.2 (June 1963): 241-49. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2010.
- Vander Ven, Tom. "Robert Frost's Dramatic Principle of 'Oversound.'" *American Literature* 45.2 (May 1973): 238-51. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Dec. 2010.

Wagenknecht, Edward. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: His Poetry and Prose*. New York: Unger, 1986. Print.

Warren, Robert Penn. "Pure and Impure Poetry." *Kenyon Review* 5.2 (Spring 1943): 225-54. *JSTOR*. Web. 17 Jan. 2011.

Wilbur, Richard. "Poe and the Art of Suggestion." Rpt. in *Critical Essays on Edgar Allan Poe*. Ed. Eric W. Carlson. New York: Hall, 1987. 160-72. Print.

## Appendix A: Poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“The Day Is Done”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

The day is done, and the darkness  
Falls from the wings of Night,  
As a feather is wafted downward  
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village  
Gleam through the rain and the mist,  
And a feeling of sadness comes o’er me  
That my soul cannot resist :

A feeling of sadness and longing,  
That is not akin to pain,  
And resembles sorrow only  
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,  
Some simple and heartfelt lay,  
That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,

Not from the bards sublime,  
Whose distant footsteps echo  
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,  
Their mighty thoughts suggest  
Life's endless toil and endeavor ;  
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
As showers from the clouds of summer,  
Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who, through long days of labor,  
And nights devoid of ease,  
Still heard in his soul the music  
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet  
The restless pulse of care,  
And come like the benediction  
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume  
 The poem of thy choice,  
 And lend to the rhyme of the poet  
 The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,  
 And the cars, that infest the day,  
 Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
 And as silently steal away (emphasis added).

Sonorants of “The Day Is Done”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

The day is done, and the darkness  
 Falls from the wings of Night,  
 As a feather is wafted downward  
 From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village  
 Glean through the rain and the mist,  
 And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me  
 That my soul cannot resist :

A feeling of sadness and longing,  
 That is not akin to pain,

And resembles sorrow only

As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,

Some simple and heartfelt lay,

That shall soothe this restless feeling,

And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,

Not from the bards sublime,

Whose distant footsteps echo

Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,

Their mighty thoughts suggest

Life's endless toil and endeavor ;

And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,

Whose songs gushed from his heart,

As showers from the clouds of summer,

Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who, through long days of labor,  
 And nights devoid of ease,  
 Still heard in his soul the music  
 Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet  
 The restless pulse of care,  
 And come like the benediction  
 That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume  
 The poem of thy choice,  
 And lend to the rhyme of the poet  
 The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,  
 And the cares, that infest the day,  
 Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
 And as silently steal away (emphasis added).

Obstruents of “The Day Is Done”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

The day is done, and the darkness  
 Falls from the wings of Night,

As a feather is wafted downward  
 From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village  
 Gleam through the rain and the mist,  
 And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me  
 That my soul cannot resist :

A feeling of sadness and longing,  
 That is not akin to pain,  
 And resembles sorrow only  
 As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,  
 Some simple and heartfelt lay,  
 That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
 And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,  
 Not from the bards sublime,  
 Whose distant footsteps echo  
 Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,  
Their mighty thoughts suggest  
Life's endless toil and endeavor ;  
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
As showers from the clouds of summer,  
Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who, through long days of labor,  
And nights devoid of ease,  
Still heard in his soul the music  
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet  
The restless pulse of care,  
And come like the benediction  
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume  
The poem of thy choice,  
And lend to the rhyme of the poet

The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,

And the cares, that infest the day,

Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,

And as silently steal away (emphasis added).

“Mezzo Cammin”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

Half of my life is gone, and I have let

The years slip from me and have not fulfilled

The aspiration of my youth, to build

Some tower of song with lofty parapet.

Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret

Of restless passions that would not be stilled,

But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,

Kept me from what I may accomplish yet ;

Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past

Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights, --

A city in the twilight dim and vast,

With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights, --

And hear above me on the autumnal blast

The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights (emphasis added).

Sonorants of “Mezzo Cammin”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

Half of my life is gone, and I have let

The years slip from me and have not fulfilled

The aspiration of my youth, to build

Some tower of song with lofty parapet.

Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret

Of restless passions that would not be stilled,

But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,

Kept me from what I may accomplish yet ;

Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past

Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights, --

A city in the twilight dim and vast,

With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights, --

And hear above me on the autumnal blast

The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights (emphasis added).

Obstruents of “Mezzo Cammin”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow)

Half of my life is gone, and I have let

The years slip from me and have not fulfilled

The aspiration of my youth, to build

Some tower of song with lofty parapet.  
 Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret  
 Of restless passions that would not be stilled,  
 But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,  
 Kept me from what I may accomplish yet ;  
 Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past  
 Lying beneath me with its sounds and sighs, --  
 A city in the twilight dim and vast,  
 With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights, --  
 And hear above me on the autumnal blast  
 The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights (emphasis added).

“My Lost Youth”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

Often I think of the beautiful town  
 That is seated by the sea ;  
 Often in thought go up and down  
 The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
 And my youth comes back to me.  
 And a verse of a Lapland song  
 Is haunting my memory still :  
 ‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
And catch, in sudden gleams,  
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
And islands that were the Hesperides  
Of all my boyish dreams.  
And the burden of that old song,  
It murmurs and whispers still :  
[refrain omitted]

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
And the sea-tides tossing free ;  
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
And the magic of the sea.  
And the voice of that wayward song  
Is singing and saying still :  
[refrain omitted]

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
And the fort upon the hill ;  
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,  
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song

Throbs in my memory still :

[refrain omitted]

I remember the sea-fight far away,

How it thundered o'er the tide!

And the dead captains, as they lay

In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay

Where they in battle died.

And the sound of that mournful song

Goes through me with a thrill :

[refrain omitted]

I can see the breezy dome of groves,

The shadows of Deering's Woods ;

And the friendships old and the early loves

Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves

In quiet neighborhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,

It flutters and murmurs still :

[refrain omitted]

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart

Across the school-boy's brain ;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.

And the voice of that fitful song  
Sings on, and is never still :

[refrain omitted]

There are things of which I may not speak ;  
There are dreams that cannot die ;  
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,  
And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
And a mist before the eye.

And the words of that fatal song  
Come over me like a chill :

[refrain omitted]

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
When I visit the dear old town ;  
But the native air is pure and sweet,  
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,  
As they balance up and down,  
Are singing the beautiful song,

Are sighing and whispering still :

[refrain omitted]

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,

And with joy that is almost pain

My heart goes back to wander there,

And among the dreams of the days that were,

I find my lost youth again.

And the strange and beautiful song,

The groves are repeating it still :

[refrain omitted] (emphasis added)

Sonorants of "My Lost Youth": Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

Often I think of the beautiful town

That is seated by the sea ;

Often in thought go up and down

The pleasant streets of that dear old town,

And my youth comes back to me.

And a verse of a Lapland song

Is haunting my memory still :

'A boy's will is the wind's will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
 And catch, in sudden gleams,  
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
 And islands that were the Hesperides  
 Of all my boyish dreams.  
 And the burden of that old song,  
 It murmurs and whispers still :  
 [refrain omitted]

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
 And the sea-tides tossing free ;  
 And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.  
 And the voice of that wayward song  
 Is singing and saying still :  
 [refrain omitted]

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
 And the fort upon the hill ;  
 The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,  
 The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
 And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song

Throbs in my memory still :

[refrain omitted]

I remember the sea-fight far away,

How it thundered o'er the tide!

And the dead captains, as they lay

In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay

Where they in battle died.

And the sound of that mournful song

Goes through me with a thrill :

[refrain omitted]

I can see the breezy dome of groves,

The shadows of Deering's Woods ;

And the friendships old and the early loves

Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves

In quiet neighborhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,

It flutters and murmurs still :

[refrain omitted]

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart

Across the school-boy's brain ;  
 The song and the silence in the heart,  
 That in part are prophecies, and in part  
 Are longings wild and vain.  
 And the voice of that fitful song  
 Sings on, and is never still :  
 [refrain omitted]

There are things of which I may not speak ;  
 There are dreams that cannot die ;  
 There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,  
 And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
 And a mist before the eye.  
 And the words of that fatal song  
 Come over me like a chill :  
 [refrain omitted]

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
 When I visit the dear old town ;  
 But the native air is pure and sweet,  
 And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,  
 As they balance up and down,  
 Are singing the beautiful song,

Are sighing and whispering still :

[refrain omitted]

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,

And with joy that is almost pain

My heart goes back to wander there,

And among the dreams of the days that were,

I find my lost youth again.

And the strange and beautiful song,

The groves are repeating it still :

[refrain omitted] (emphasis added)

Obstruents of "My Lost Youth": Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

Often I think of the beautiful town

That is seated by the sea ;

Often in thought go up and down

The pleasant streets of that dear old town,

And my youth comes back to me.

And a verse of a Lapland song

Is haunting my memory still :

'A boy's will is the wind's will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
 And catch, in sudden gleams,  
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
 And islands that were the Hesperides  
 Of all my boyish dreams.  
 And the burden of that old song,  
 It murmurs and whispers still :  
 [refrain omitted]

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
 And the sea-tides tossing free ;  
 And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.  
 And the voice of that wayward song  
 Is singing and saying still :  
 [refrain omitted]

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
 And the fort upon the hill ;  
 The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,  
 The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
 And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song

Throbs in my memory still :

[refrain omitted]

I remember the sea-fight far away,

How it thundered o'er the tide!

And the dead captains, as they lay

In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay

Where they in battle died.

And the sound of that mournful song

Goes through me with a thrill :

[refrain omitted]

I can see the breezy dome of groves,

The shadows of Deering's Woods ;

And the friendships old and the early loves

Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves

In quiet neighborhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,

It flutters and murmurs still :

[refrain omitted]

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart

Across the school-boy's brain ;  
 The song and the silence in the heart,  
 That in part are prophecies, and in part  
 Are longings wild and vain.  
 And the voice of that fitful song  
 Sings on, and is never still :  
 [refrain omitted]

There are things of which I may not speak ;  
 There are dreams that cannot die ;  
 There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,  
 And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
 And a mist before the eye.  
 And the words of that fatal song  
 Come over me like a chill :  
 [refrain omitted]

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
 When I visit the dear old town ;  
 But the native air is pure and sweet,  
 And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,  
 As they balance up and down,  
 Are singing the beautiful song,

Are sighing and whispering still :

[refrain omitted]

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,

And with joy that is almost pain

My heart goes back to wander there,

And among the dreams of the days that were,

I find my lost youth again.

And the strange and beautiful song,

The groves are repeating it still :

[refrain omitted] (emphasis added)

## Appendix B: Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe

“To Helen”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

Helen, thy beauty is to me  
 Like those Nicean barks of yore,  
 That gently, o’er a perfumed sea,  
 The weary, way-worn wanderer bore  
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
 To the glory that was Greece,  
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche  
 How statue-like I see thee stand,  
 The agate lamp within thy hand!  
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which  
 Are Holy-Land! (emphasis added)

Sonorants of “To Helen”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

Helen, thy beauty is to me  
 Like those Nicean barks of yore,

That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
 The weary, way-worn wanderer bore  
 To his own native shore

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
 To the glory that was Greece,  
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche  
 How statue-like I see thee stand,  
 The agate lamp within thy hand!  
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which  
 Are Holy-Land! (emphasis added)

Obstruents of “To Helen”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

Helen, thy beauty is to me  
 Like those Nicean barks of yore,  
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
 The weary, way-worn wanderer bore  
 To his own native shore

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
 To the glory that was Greece,  
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche  
 How statue-like I see thee stand,  
 The agate lamp within thy hand!  
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which  
 Are Holy-Land! (emphasis added)

“Annabel Lee”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

It was many and many a year ago,  
 In a kingdom by the sea,  
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
 By the name of Annabel Lee; --  
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
 Than to love and be loved by me.

She was a child and I was a child,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 But we loved with a love that was more than love –

I and my Annabel Lee –  
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven  
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
A wind blew out of a cloud by night  
Chilling my Annabel Lee;  
So that her highborn kinsmen came  
And bore her away from me,  
To shut her up, in a sepulchre  
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,  
Went envying her and me: --

Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,  
In this kingdom by the sea)  
That the wind came out of the cloud, chilling  
And killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
Of those who were older than we –  
Of many far wiser than we –  
And neither the angels in Heaven above

Nor the demons down under the sea  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee: --

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride  
 In her sepulchre there by the sea –  
 In her tomb by the side of the sea (emphasis added).

Sonorants of “Annabel Lee”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

It was many and many a year ago,  
 In a kingdom by the sea,  
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
 By the name of Annabel Lee; --  
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
 Than to love and be loved by me.

She was a child and I was a child,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,

But we loved with a love that was more than love –

I and my Annabel Lee –

With a love that the winged seraphs of Heaven

Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,

In this kingdom by the sea,

A wind blew out of a cloud by night

Chilling my Annabel Lee;

So that her highborn kinsmen came

And bore her away from me,

To shut her up, in a sepulchre

In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,

Went envying her and me: --

Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,

In this kingdom by the sea)

That the wind came out of the cloud, chilling

And killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love

Of those who were older than we –

Of many far wiser than we –  
 And neither the angels in Heaven above  
 Nor the demons down under the sea  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee: --

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride  
 In her sepulchre there by the sea –  
 In her tomb by the side of the sea (emphasis added).

Obstruents of “Annabel Lee”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

It was many and many a year ago,  
 In a kingdom by the sea,  
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
 By the name of Annabel Lee; --  
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
 Than to love and be loved by me.

*She* was a child and *I* was a child,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 But we loved with a love that was more than love –  
 I and my Annabel Lee –  
 With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven  
 Covered her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 A wind blew out of a cloud by night  
 Chilling my Annabel Lee;  
 So that her highborn kinsmen came  
 And bore her away from me,  
 To shut her up, in a sepulchre  
 In this kingdom by the sea.  
 The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,  
 Went envying her and me: --  
 Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,  
 In this kingdom by the sea)  
 That the wind came out of the cloud, chilling  
 And killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love

Of those who were older than we –  
 Of many far wiser than we –  
 And neither the angels in Heaven above  
 Nor the demons down under the sea  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee: --

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride  
 In her sepulchre there by the sea –  
 In her tomb by the side of the sea. (emphasis added)

“The Raven”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore –  
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
 As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door –  
 “’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—  
 Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;  
 And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
 Eagerly I wished the morrow; -- vainly I had sought to borrow  
 From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore –  
 For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore –  
     Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
 Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
 So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
 “‘Tis some visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door –  
 Some late visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door; --  
     This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
 “Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
 But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
 And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
 That I scarce was sure I heard you” – here I opened wide the door; ---  
     Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
 Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
 And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"  
 This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"  
 Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
 Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before,  
 "Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
 Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore –  
 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; --  
 'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
 In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;  
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;  
 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door –  
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door –  
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
 "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,  
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore –

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,

Though its answer little meaning – little relevancy bore;

For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being

Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door –

Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,

With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only

That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.

Nothing farther then he uttered – not a feather then he fluttered –

Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before –

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."

Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,

"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store

Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster

Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore –

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore

Of 'Never – nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore –  
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
     Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;  
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
 On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,  
 But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,  
     *She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
 Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
 “Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee – by these angels he hath sent thee  
 Respite – respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;  
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”  
     Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil! –  
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted –  
 On this home by Horror haunted – tell me truly, I implore –  
 Is there – *is* there balm in Gilead? – tell me – tell me, I implore!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil!  
 By that Heaven that bends above us – by that God we both adore –  
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore –  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting –  
 “Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!  
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
 Leave my loneliness unbroken! – quit the bust above my door!  
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting  
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,  
 And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
 Shall be lifted – nevermore! (emphasis added)

Sonorants of “The Raven”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore –  
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
 As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door –  
 “Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—  
 Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;  
 And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
 Eagerly I wished the morrow; -- vainly I had sought to borrow  
 From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore –  
 For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore –  
 Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
 Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
 So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
 “Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door –  
 Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; --

This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
 “Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
 But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
 And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
 That I scarce was sure I heard you” – here I opened wide the door; ---  
 Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
 Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
 But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
 And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore?”  
 This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”  
 Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
 Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before,  
 “Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;  
 Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore –  
 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; --  
 ‘Tis the wind and nothing more!”

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
 In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;  
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;  
 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door –  
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door –  
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
 “Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven,  
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore –  
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”  
 Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
 Though its answer little meaning – little relevancy bore;  
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door –  
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
 With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only  
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.

Nothing farther then he uttered – not a feather then he fluttered –  
 Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friends have flown before –  
 On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”

Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
 “Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store  
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore –  
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
 Of ‘Never – nevermore.’”

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore –  
 What this grim, unganly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
 Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;  
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
 On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,

But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
 Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
 "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee – by these angels he hath sent thee  
 Respite – respite and repentance from thy memories of Lenore;  
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind repentance and forget this lost Lenore!"  
 Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil! –  
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,  
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted –  
 On this home by Horror haunted – tell me truly, I implore –  
 Is there – is there balm in Gilead? – tell me – tell me, I implore!"  
 Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil!  
 By that Heaven that bends above us – by that God we both adore –  
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore –  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."  
 Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting –

“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! – quit the bust above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,

And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

Shall be lifted – nevermore! (emphasis added)

Obstruents of “The Raven”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,

Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore –

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door –

“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—

Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;

And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
 Eagerly I wished the morrow; -- vainly I had sought to borrow  
 From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore –  
 For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore –  
 Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
 Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
 So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
 “’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door –  
 Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; --  
 This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
 “Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
 But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
 And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
 That I scarce was sure I heard you” – here I opened wide the door; ---  
 Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
 Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
 But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,

And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,

Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before,

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore –

Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; --

'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,

In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;

Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door –

Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door –

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,

By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,

"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore –

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvel'd this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
 Though its answer little meaning – little relevancy bore;  
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door –  
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
 With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only  
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.  
 Nothing farther then he uttered – not a feather then he fluttered –  
 Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before –  
 On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."

Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store  
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore –  
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
 Of 'Never – nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I bemoon myself to linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore –  
 What this grim, ungodly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
     Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;  
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,  
 But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,  
     *She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
 Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
 “Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee – by these angels he hath sent thee  
 Respite – respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;  
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”  
     Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil! –  
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted –  
 On this home by Horror haunted – tell me truly, I implore –  
 Is there – is there balm in Gilead? – tell me – tell me, I implore!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil!  
 By that Heaven that bends above us – by that God we both adore –  
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore –  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting –  
 “Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!  
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
 Leave my loneliness unbroken! – quit the bust above my door!  
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting  
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,  
 And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

Shall be lifted – nevermore! (emphasis added)

## Appendix C: Poetry of Robert Frost

“Desert Places”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast

In a field I looked into going past,

And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,

But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it—it is theirs.

All animals are smothered in their lairs.

I am too absent-spirited to count;

The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness

Will be more lonely ere it will be less—

A blanker whiteness of benighted snow

With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces

Between stars—on stars where no human race is.

I have it in me so much nearer home

To scare myself with my own desert places (emphasis added).

Sonorants of “Desert Places”: Nasals (red), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast

In a field I looked into going past,

And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,

But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it—it is theirs.

All animals are smothered in their lairs.

I am too absent-spirited to count;

The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness

Will be more lonely ere it will be less—

A blanker whiteness of benighted snow

With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces

Between stars—on stars where no human race is.

I have it in me so much nearer home

To scare myself with my own desert places. (emphasis added)

Obstruents of “Desert Places”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast

In a field I looked into going past,  
 And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,  
 But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it—it is theirs.  
 All animals are smothered in their lairs.  
 I am too absent-spirited to count;  
 The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness  
 Will be more lonely ere it will be less—  
 A blanker whiteness of benighted snow  
 With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces  
 Between stars—on stars where no human race is.  
 I have it in me so much nearer home  
 To scare myself with my own desert places. (emphasis added)

“Into My Own”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

One of my wishes is that those dark trees,  
 So old and firm they scarcely show the breeze,  
 Were not, as ‘twere, the merest mask of gloom,

But stretched away unto the edge of doom.

I should not be withheld but that some day

Into their vastness I should steal away,

Fearless of ever finding open land,

Or highway where the slow wheel pours the sand.

I do not see why I should e'er turn back,

Or those should not set forth upon my track

To overtake me, who should miss me here

And long to know if still I held them dear.

They would not find me changed from his they knew—

Only more sure of all I thought was true. (emphasis added)

Sonorants of “Into My Own”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green), Vowels (red)

One of my wishes is that those dark trees,

So old and firm they scarcely show the breeze,

Were not, as 'twere, the merest mask of gloom,

But stretched away unto the edge of doom.

I should not be withheld but that some day

Into their vastness I should steal away,

Fearless of ever finding open land,  
 Or highway where the slow wheel pours the sand.

I do not see why I should e'er turn back,  
 Or those should not set forth upon my track  
 To overtake me, who should miss me here  
 And long to know if still I held them dear.

They would not find me changed from him they knew—  
 Only more sure of all I thought was true. (emphasis added).

Obstruents of “Into My Own”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

One of my wishes is that those dark trees,  
 So old and firm they scarcely show the breeze,  
 Were not, as 'twere, the merest mask of gloom,  
 But stretched away unto the edge of doom.

I should not be withheld but that some day  
 Into their vastness I should steal away,  
 Fearless of ever finding open land,  
 Or highway where the slow wheel pours the sand.

I do not see why I should e'er turn back,

Or those should not set forth upon my track

To overtake me, who should miss me here

And long to know if still I held them dear.

They would not find me changed from him they knew—

Only more sure of all I thought was true. (emphasis added)

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

Whose woods these are I think I know

His house is in the village, though:

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
 But I have promises to keep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep. (emphasis added)

Sonorants of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), and  
 Glides (green)

Whose woods these are I think I know  
 His house is in the village, though:  
 He will not see me stopping here  
 To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
 To stop without a farmhouse near  
 Between the woods and frozen lake  
 The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
 To ask if there is some mistake.  
 The only other sound's the sweep  
 Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,

But I have promises to keep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep. (emphasis added)

Obstruents of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow),  
 Affricates (green)

Whose woods these are I think I know  
 His house is in the village, though:  
 He will not see me stopping here  
 To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
 To stop without a farmhouse near  
 Between the woods and frozen lake  
 The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
 To ask if there is some mistake.  
 The only other sound's the sweep  
 Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
 But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep. (emphasis added)

## Appendix D: Poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay

“A Visit to the Asylum”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

Once from a big, big building,

When I was small, small,

The queer folk in the windows

Would smile at me and call.

And in the hard wee gardens

Such pleasant men would hoe:

“Sir, may we touch the little girl’s hair!”—

It was so red, you know.

They cut me coloured asters

With shears so sharp and neat,

They brought me grapes and plums and pears

And pretty cakes to eat.

And out of all the windows,

No matter where we went,

The merriest eyes would follow me

And make me compliment.

There were a thousand windows,

All latticed up and down.

And up to all the windows,

When we went back to town,

The queer folk put their faces,

As gentle as could be;

“Come again, little girl!” they called, and I

Called back, “You come see me!” (emphasis added)

Sonorants of “A Visit to the Asylum”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green)

Once from a big, big building,

When I was small, small,

The queer folk in the windows

Would smile at me and call.

And in the hard wee gardens

Such pleasant men would hoe:

“Sir, may we touch the little girl’s hair!”—

It was so red, you know.

They cut me coloured asters

With shears so sharp and neat,

They brought me grapes and plums and pears

And pretty cakes to eat.

And out of all the windows,

No matter where we went,

The merriest eyes would follow me

And make me compliment.

There were a thousand windows,

All latticed up and down.

And up to all the windows,

When we went back to town,

The queer folk put their faces,

As gentle as could be;

“Come again, little girl!” they called, and I

Called back, “You come see me!” (emphasis added)

Obstruents of “A Visit to the Asylum”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

Once from a big, big building,

When I was small, small,

The queer folk in the windows

Would smile at me and call.

And in the hard wee gardens

Such pleasant men would hoe:

“Sir, may we touch the little girl’s hair!”—

It was so red, you know.

They cut me coloured asters

With shears so sharp and neat,

They brought me grapes and plums and pears

And pretty cakes to eat.

And out of all the windows,

No matter where we went,

The merriest eyes would follow me

And make me compliment.

There were a thousand windows,

All latticed up and down.

And up to all the windows,

When we went back to town,

The queer folk put their faces,

As gentle as could be;

“Come again, little girl!” they called, and I

Called back, “You come see me!” (emphasis added)

“Bluebeard”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

This door you might not open, and you did;  
 So enter now, and see for what slight thing  
 You are betrayed. . . . Here is no treasure hid,  
 No cauldron, no clear crystal mirroring  
 The sought-for Truth, no heads of women slain  
 For greed like yours, no writhings of distress;  
 But only what you see. . . . Look yet again:  
 An empty room, cobwebbed and comfortless.  
 Yet this alone out of my life I kept  
 Unto myself, lest any know me quite;  
 And you did so profane me when you crept  
 Unto the threshold of this room tonight  
 That I must never more behold your face.  
 This now is yours. I seek another place. (emphasis added)

Sonorants of “Bluebeard”: Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green)

This door you might not open, and you did;  
 So enter now, and see for what slight thing  
 You are betrayed. . . . Here is no treasure hid,  
 No cauldron, no clear crystal mirroring

The sought-for Truth, no heads of women slain  
 For greed like yours, no writhings of distress;  
 But only what you see. . . . Look yet again:  
 An empty room, cobwebbed and comfortless.  
 Yet this alone out of my life I kept  
 Unto myself, lest any know me quite;  
 And you did so profane me when you crept  
 Unto the threshold of this room tonight  
 That I must never more behold your face.  
 This now is yours. I seek another place. (emphasis added)

Obstruents of “Bluebeard”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

This door you might not open, and you did;  
 So enter now, and see for what slight thing  
 You are betrayed. . . . Here is no treasure hid,  
 No cauldron, no clear crystal mirroring  
 The sought-for Truth, no heads of women slain  
 For greed like yours, no writhings of distress;  
 But only what you see. . . . Look yet again:  
 An empty room, cobwebbed and comfortless.  
 Yet this alone out of my life I kept  
 Unto myself, lest any know me quite;  
 And you did so profane me when you crept

Unto the threshold of this room tonight

That I must never more behold your face.

This now is yours. I seek another place. (emphasis added)

“The Leaf and the Tree”: Sonorants (red) vs. Obstruents (black)

When will you learn, my self, to be

A dying leaf on a living tree?

Budding, swelling, growing strong,

Wearing green, but not for long,

Drawing sustenance from air,

That other leaves, and you not there,

May bud, and at the autumn’s call

Wearing russet, ready to fall?

Has not this trunk a deed to do

Ungessed by small and tremulous you?

Shall not these branches in the end

To wisdom and the truth ascend?

And the great lightning plunging by

Look sidewise with a golden eye

To glimpse a tree so tall and proud

It sheds its leaves upon a cloud?

Here, I think, is the heart's grief:  
 The tree, no mightier than the leaf,  
 Makes firm its root and spreads its crown  
 And stands; but in the end comes down.  
 That airy top no boy could climb  
 Is trodden in a little time  
 By cattle on their way to drink.  
 The fluttering thoughts a leaf can think,  
 That hears the wind and waits its turn,  
 Have taught it all a tree can learn.  
  
 Time can make soft that iron wood.  
 The tallest trunk that ever stood,  
 In time, without a dream to keep,  
 Crawls in beside the root to sleep (emphasis added).

Sonorants of "The Leaf and the Tree": Nasals (yellow), Liquids (blue), Glides (green)

When will you learn, my self, to be  
 A dying leaf on a living tree?  
 Budding, swelling, growing strong,  
 Wearing green, but not for long,  
 Drawing sustenance from air,  
 That other leaves, and you not there,

May bud, and at the autumn's call

Wearing russet, ready to fall?

Has not this trunk a deed to do

Ungessed by small and tremulous you?

Shall not these branches in the end

To wisdom and the truth ascend?

And the great lightning plunging by

Look sidewise with a golden eye

To glimpse a tree so tall and proud

It sheds its leaves upon a cloud?

Here, I think, is the heart's grief:

The tree, no mightier than the leaf,

Makes firm its root and spreads its crown

And stands; but in the end comes down.

That airy top no boy could climb

Is trodden in a little time

By cattle on their way to drink.

The fluttering thoughts a leaf can think,

That hears the wind and waits its turn,

Have taught it all a tree can learn.

Time can make soft that iron wood.  
 The tallest trunk that ever stood,  
 In time, without a dream to keep,  
 Crawls in beside the root to sleep (emphasis added).

Obstruents of “The Leaf and the Tree”: Stops (red), Fricatives (yellow), Affricates (green)

When will you learn, my self, to be  
 A dying leaf on a living tree?  
 Budding, swelling, growing strong,  
 Wearing green, but not for long,  
 Drawing sustenance from air,  
 That other leaves, and you not there,  
 May bud, and at the autumn’s call  
 Wearing russet, ready to fall?

Has not this trunk a deed to do  
 Unguessed by small and tremulous you?  
 Shall not these branches in the end  
 To wisdom and the truth ascend?  
 And the great lightning plunging by  
 Look sidewise with a golden eye  
 To glimpse a tree so tall and proud  
 If sheds its leaves upon a cloud?

Here, I think, is the heart's grief:  
 The tree, no mightier than the leaf,  
 Makes firm its root and spreads its crown  
 And stands; but in the end comes down.  
 That airy top no boy could climb  
 Is trodden in a little time  
 By cattle on their way to drink.  
 The fluttering thoughts a leaf can think,  
 That hears the wind and waits its turn,  
 Have taught it all a tree can learn.

Time can make soft that iron wood.  
 The tallest trunk that ever stood,  
 In time, without a dream to keep,  
 Crawls in beside the root to sleep. (emphasis added)