EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS INTO YOUR LITERARY ANALYSIS

PART 3C: FORMATTING QUOTATIONS – POETRY

Professor Lisa Yanover
Napa Valley College
Part 3C: Formatting Poetry

Quotations

John Hollander (b. 1929)
SWAN AND SHADOW 1969

Dusk
Above the
water hang the
loud
flies
Here
O so
gray
then
What
When
Where
In us
No
A pale signal will appear
Soon before its shadow fades
Here in this pool of opened eye
No Upon us As at the very edges
of where we take shape in the dark air
this object bares its image awakening
ripples of recognition that will
brush darkness up into light
even after this bird this hour both drift by atop the perfect sad instant now
already passing out of sight
toward yet-untroubled reflection
this image bears its object darkening
into memorial shades Scattered bits of
light
No of water Or something across
water
Breaking up No Being regathered
soon
Yet by then a swan will have
gone
Yet out of mind into what
vast
pale
hush
of a
place
past
sudden dark as
if a swan
sang
Formatting Poetry Quotations:
Some Definitions

**Lines** are the primary unit of meaning in poetry. A line may present a single word, a phrase, or one or more complete sentences. Lines in a single poem may have similar or varying lengths. **Sentences** are also a unit of meaning in poetry (as they are in prose). A single sentence may run across several lines or even a whole poem. Sometimes the line and the sentence work together to create a common meaning or effect; sometimes they add to, contrast, or contradict each other.

**Line breaks** create a pause. Some line breaks, those without any punctuation, are very brief, just long enough for the eye to skip down to the next line. These lines are called **enjambed** or (run-on) **lines** as they run over onto the next line. Lines with punctuation at the end create a bit more of a pause. These lines are called **end-stopped lines**. The longest pause is created by a period at the end of a line.

**A stanza** is the poem's version of a paragraph. Some poems are written all in one stanza; others are broken up into multiple stanzas, sometimes of regular or irregular length (number of lines).
**Formatting Poetry Quotations: Short**

A short poetry quotation is under four lines of the original text. One word-lines count as lines. Short poetry quotations are marked by quotation marks and are part of your paragraph. Everything about the poem's content and style or form must be duplicated exactly, including line and stanza breaks that fall in the middle of your quotation. In short poetry quotations, identify line breaks with a forward slash / and stanza breaks with two forward slashes ///. Leave a space before and after the slash (or before the first and after the last for 2 together). If the poem capitalizes the first word of each line regardless of whether it's a new sentence, maintain this capitalization in your quotation even if it comes in the middle of your sentence. Similarly, if a poem uses lowercase letters for a word that would typically be capitalized, use the lowercase form.

- **Note about punctuation:** The parenthetical in-text citation comes after the end quotation marks with a space between the quotation marks and the parentheses. Put the end punctuation of your sentence after the in-text citation. The only punctuation that would come inside the quotation marks is a question mark (?) or exclamation mark (!) that is part of the original text, not added by you, and you still need end punctuation to end or continue your sentence after the parenthetical citation.

**In-Text Citations for Poetry:** Use the author's last name and the line number(s).

- **Note:** Do not use the word line or any punctuation between the author's last name and the line number. If you're only writing about one poem and you've already identified the author, you can provide the line number(s) only: (6).
A short partial quotation is one or more words, a phrase, or a clause creating a complete sentence only when joined with your sentence. Notice that the only punctuation that might be used before a short partial quotation would be a comma and only if it would be used even if there were no quotation.

- Example: The speaker mourns that he has found “nothing but sand” (Pinsky 4). Life is absent and longed for.

- Example: The speaker’s sorrow that “The dried mouthbones of a shark in the hot swale / Gaped on nothing but sand on either side” (Pinsky 3-4) is apparent.

- Example: William Carlos Williams' poem "The Red Wheelbarrow," in fact, depends on "a red wheel / barrow // glazed with rain" (3-5) to make its argument for the importance of the object itself.
A short complete poetry quotation is under four lines of the original text but consists of a complete sentence or sentences that are introduced by your complete sentence, ending with a colon.

- Example: The first line of the poem "The Want Bone" introduces human longing: "The tongue of the waves tolled in the earth's bell" (Pinsky). The longing, in this case, is for what is missing: life and more importantly human life.

- Example: Robert Pinsky's images compel us to picture death: "The dried mouthbones of a shark in the hot swale / Gaped on nothing but sand on either side" (3-4). The "mouthbones" aren't just bones; they are "dried," so they're not just dead; they’re long dead, and the eyes that are suggested by “Gap[ing]” are open but unseeing and thus lifeless.
A long poetry quotation is four or more lines of the original text. Typically, long poetry quotations will be complete. Regardless, the signal phrase introducing a long poetry quotation must be a complete sentence ending with a colon. Long poetry quotations are blocked (the left side is indented one inch) and double-spaced with no extra spaces above or below the quotation.

- **Note about punctuation:** The end punctuation comes before the parenthetical in-text citation. The end punctuation is typically a period unless the quotation itself ends in a question or exclamation. The parenthetical citation goes on the last line of the quotation if it fits or on the next line indented like the rest of the quotation.
The first stanza of Philip Levine's poem "They Feed They Lion" intimates that something is coming:

Out of burlap sacks, out of bearing butter,
Out of black bean and wet slate bread,
Out of the acids of rage, the candor of tar,
Out of creosote, gasoline, drive shafts, wooden dollies,
They Lion grow. (1-5)

These opening lines paint a picture of something, beast-like, emerging "Out of" the natural and industrial landscape. The alliteration of "b's" and the third line's "acids of rage" and "candor of tar" make it sound angry, possibly something to be feared. The "Lion" in the last line of the stanza is made to sound like a verb, but our familiarity with the animal and the capitalization of the word emphasize that it is a noun, the thing, the beast that is coming.