

Substitution Assignment

What follows in the first part of this assignment (#1-16) are examples of regular (perfect) meter. But then you are to assume your composer has come along and set the phrase to music in such a way that one of the feet no longer fits into a regular pattern. This causes at least one foot to get mispronounced (for example, GIRaffe, instead of girAFFE). You are to make a substitution which will fix the problem. In most cases, this will mean that you'll have to scan the original words, then scan the foot which your composer has altered, and then find a substitution which repairs the prosody.

Part One: Avoiding/Ensuring accents (substitutions in the third foot)

Avoiding an accent. In each of the following lines, assume that music has made the third foot a perfect trochee, causing an accent which the original line can't support. *Scan these as tetrameter, and make substitutions in the third foot only. Your substitution should retain as much of the original meaning as possible.*

Example. In the following, assume that music has made the third foot trochaic. Make a substitution in the third foot which will repairs the prosody.

Original: *You see how well that kids can get along.*

Substitution: *You see how well children can get along.*

1. You see how well that men can get along.
2. Having dessert is the highpoint of mealtime.
3. I make up things to say to you.
4. Cucumber sandwiches smothered with mayonnaise
5. Love fooled me. Shame!

Avoiding an accent (iambic). In each of the following lines, assume the music has made the third foot a perfect iamb. Make a substitution which will avoid the accent. *Scan these as tetrameter, and make substitutions in the third foot only. Your substitution should retain as much of the original meaning as possible.*

Example: In the following, assume the music has made the third foot iambic. Make a substitution in the third foot which will ensure the accent.

Original: *Thousands of daffodils hemorrhage yellowness*

Substitution: *Thousands of daffodils secrete yellowness*

6. Heaven can see that you really are wonderful
7. Chicks and ducks and geese better scurry
8. I just came back. Lisbon was great.
9. Up in the morning! Ya gotta love hangovers!
10. If you think I will blink when you shout, you are wrong.
11. I love this family of mine.

Ensuring an accent. In the following, assume the music has made the third foot iambic. Make a substitution which will ensure the accent.

12. Thousands of daffodils hemorrhage yellowness
13. Life is dreary, deadly boring
14. O, all that good money wasted
15. Modern major generals with vegetables are fascinating.
16. Wow, that woman's snoring loudly.

Part Two: Supporting the Meaning

Supporting the meaning (slowing down). In the following, assume the music slows down at the tail end of the phrase. Make a substitution at the end of the second line which will support the meaning by causing the rhythm to slow down. You are to rewrite each pair of lines twice: first by substituting a spondee; then secondly by substituting a single syllable for the bisyllable second-to-last foot.

Example: You are to rewrite each pair of lines twice: first by substituting a spondee; then by substituting a single syllable for the bisyllable second-to-last foot (“push it”)

Original:

*Over and over he rolled the slow wagon
Until he could push it no more.*

Substitute a spondee:

*Over and over he rolled the slow wagon
Until he could slog mud no more*

Substitute single syllable

*Over and over he rolled the slow wagon
Until he could roll no more.*

17/18.

Over and over he rolled the slow wagon
Until he could push it no more.

19/20.

We stayed up too late; until
The wall clock sounded midnight.

21/22.

I couldn't bear it any longer.
Would she? Wouldn't she? I held my breath.

Supporting the meaning (speeding up). In the following, *speed things up* by making a substitution at the end of the second line.

23.

I couldn't bear it any longer.
Would she? Wouldn't she? I held my breath.

Supporting the meaning (subtext). In the following, make substitutions to support the meaning. Don't rewrite the line. Substitute one or two feet with alternate meter. Emptying a foot out completely is an allowable substitution. *Retain as much of the original meaning as possible, but with substitutions, emphasize the subtext.*

Example:

Original:

*You have asked a question
And I hardly think I know the answer.*

(Meaning: *I want to stop and think about this....*)

Substitution:

*You asked a question.
I hardly know the answer.*

24. Well, ain't that fine news!
I can buy some shoes.

Meaning: *I'm so excited I can't sit still!*

25. Don't look so wise,
Don't show your scorn:
Watch yourself,
I warn.

Meaning: *I'm going to get you, if it's the last thing I do!*

26. Remember when you first reached for my hand?
Remember how cold and trembling you said it was?

Meaning: *I'm so filled with emotion, I'm having troubles speaking.*

27. There have been a thousand raggy, draggy dances
That are danced in every hall.

Meaning: *I'm so-o-o bored!*

28. There have been a thousand raggy, draggy dances
That are danced in every hall.

Meaning: *Ooo, those dancing women are so naughty....*

Part Three: Allowing the Phrase to Breathe

Allowing the phrase to breathe. In the following, find a natural break in the meaning, and open up the phrase. You are to rewrite the following quatrain twice: first by deleting a syllable or two at the break; then secondly, by substituting a word or two with fewer syllables at the break. (This might also necessitate changing the last foot or two of the final line to accommodate a new rhyme.) Don't rewrite the whole quatrain; just make substitutions to make the phrase breathe. Rewrite the quatrain twice: first with deletions, then with substitutions.

29/30.

Oh, the magic of the barracks and the battle and the clamor
And the magic of the travel and the drill and oh the glamour!
Oh, the military builds a man with lots of manly attributes
But even they can make mistakes and when they do, boy, they are beauts!