

While (last six lines)
with a rhyming
pattern



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

While reading a poem the skills applied in its creation are often easily overlooked. However, it is the unsurpassed mastership of these skills what make this particular poet the most deserving recipient of this year's prestigious POTY award. John Keats possesses unparalleled poetic craftsmanship. Three of his poems: "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," "When I have fears.

..," and "Ode to Autumn" reveal his genius at the art of poetry. The first poem: "On First Looking..

.." displays Keats's mastership at one of the most difficult forms of poetry: the sonnet. What makes a sonnet such a difficult form of poetry is the fact that in each line there are five accented and five unaccented syllables. This is a difficult task to accomplish by someone of limited writing experience.

However, Keats showed his poetic genius by mastering this form early in his writing career. The poem is in the form of an Italian sonnet which has a dual pattern: an octave (first eight lines) with a rhyming syntax of: abab abba, and a sestet (last six lines) with a rhyming pattern of: cdcd, making a total of 14 lines. In an Italian sonnet the poet focuses on a problem or a situation in the octave; then, in the sestet, he focuses on the solution of the problem or the significance of the situation.

In the first few lines, Keats describes the experience of where he had been in his literary journey before encountering "Homer": "Much have I travell'd.../ And many .

...states and kingdoms seen;" (Keats, lines 1-2). This is giving the reader the understanding that he had read many a great literary books. And, although he had been told about Homer: " Oft of one wide expanse had I been told/
That..

.. Homer ruled as his demesne," (5-6); it did not have the same effect as when he read it himself: " Yet did I never breathe its pure serene/ Till I heard Chapman speak :" (7-8).

The impact this experience had on him is told in the last six lines. First he compares himself with an astronomer discovering a new planet: " Then felt I like some watcher of the skies/ When a new planet swims into his ken;" (9-10) or a voyageur discovering new territory: " Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes/ He star'd at the Pacific and all his men/ Look'd with a wild surmise" (11-13).

After having read the poem, the reader cannot help but feel the same awe-struckness that overpowered Keats. The second poem to show Keats's craftsmanship is: " When I have fear...

" For the second time, Keats chooses to display his skill as a poet by writing in the form of a sonnet, this time being a Shakespearean one. The difference between this sonnet and the Italian one is in the pattern. The Shakespearean sonnet has three quatrains (4 lines each) with a rhyming pattern of : abab cdcd efef, and a couplet (2 lines) with the rhyming pattern of: gg. This is the most difficult form of poetry to write, yet Keats shows no difficulty in its development making one more addition to the structure: he puts his sonnet in the form of a periodic sentence.

This means that the main idea of the sentence is at the end as it is in the poem. In the first quatrain he introduces the first part of the idea by sharing his innermost feelings on a subject very familiar to all: Death. Leaving this world without his work being recognized was one of Keats's greatest emotional battles: "When I have fears that I may cease to be/ Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain," (Keats, 1-2). The second quatrain expresses his anxiety of not being able to fulfill his potential: "When I behold,

/Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,/ And think that I may never live to trace/ Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;" (5-8). The third quatrain is about his fear of not seeing his beloved evermore: "And when I feel,...

./That I shall never look upon thee more," (10-11) Finally, after telling the world of all his fears, he comes to the conclusion that all his ambitions for love and fame are meaningless, and in doing so, he submits to the idea that when it's his time to go, nothing will stand in the way: "Of the wide world I stand alone, and think/ Till love and fame to nothingness do sink." (13-14).

The third