



TYPOGRAPHY

TYPE-SYNTACTIC

Layout To Read Slow

As Oliver Simon points out in his Introduction to *Typography* (1945), poetry is more slowly and deliberately read than prose, which means that the reader is more than usually aware of typographical qualities. The defining feature of poetry is the division of the text into lines whose beginnings and ends are decided by the poet, not the editor. HTML has no provision at all for the mark-up of verse or song lyrics.

Not all typefaces can be understood on the basis of connotation, because it is not always possible to ‘place’ typefaces, to understand them on the basis of ‘where we have seen them before’, ‘where they come from’.

In that case another semiotic principle can nevertheless provide meaning, the principle of metaphor, or, more precisely, of the metaphoric potential of specific features of letterforms.

Here I apply an idea from phonology, the study of the sounds of language. Until 1956, the phonemes, the vowels and consonants of a given language, were regarded as its ‘minimal units’, as the basic building blocks from which words are assembled.

1. *simple*, Haiku
2. *wrappable*, The Arrangement
3. *rhyme*, To Leigh Hunt
4. *simple indent*, Sonnet
5. *the cadence*, From ‘Christendom’

6. *scattered indents (cascade)*, From ‘Hyperions Schicksalslied’
7. *stanza*, Old
8. *caesura*, From ‘Tintern Abbey’

Cars pass
Where do they go
Will one stop
For me

1

He says He loves
And does not answer
Does not remake the world
Seems to love it so much that He wants it the same
We go on freely unhindered about our offence
And He hangs on the cross
Helpless, unmoving, unhelped like us
Indeed we are made in the image of God
We do as we please to Him
Who courteously returns the compliment

2

Glory and loveliness have pass'd away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft voic'd and young, and gay;
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these,
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time, when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

3

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In secret toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

4

Things native sweetly grew,
Which there mine eye did view,
Plain, simple, cheap, on either side the street,
Which was exceeding fair and wide;
Sweet mansions there mine eyes did meet,
Green trees the shaded doors did hide:
My chiefest joys
Were girls and boys
That in those streets still up and down did play,
Which crown'd the Town with constant holiday.

5

Ihr wandelt droben im Licht
Auf weichem Boden, selige Genien!
Glänzende Götterlüfte
Rühren euch leicht,
Wie die Finger der Künstlerin
Heilige Saiten.

6

I grow old
I grow old
am stiff
I am cold

Does the sun
Within me set?
Or will it blaze
A little yet?

7

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beautiful forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;

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