

The Challenge of Writing Poetry After Parochial School

Writing a poem is hard for me.

I crave structure and symmetry.

I want to make the lines all rhyme,

For I was taught it is a crime

To write poetry like Cummings did

with unusual punctuation. no capital letters.

oddly constructed

no rhymes for christ's sake!

my teachers — nuns in parochial schools

living lives of rules and structure.

no way to escape the sting

of a ruler across my knuckles

for deliberately not rhyming

schools and rules 4 & 5 lines above.

i find myself in detention

under the watchful eye of sister mary apostrophe

writing 500 words on the value of

rhyming ... capitalization ... commas ... periods. PERIOD!

I yearn for the structure and rules

Taught in those parochial schools.

(I wisely rhyme this time to avoid the wooden thwack across my hand's back)

I feel the need to use iambic pentameter,

But I am just a rank poetry amateur,

and I try my hand once more at Cummings-like verses

where no rules apply —

and literary chaos reigns.

it's de riguer today

for poems to be without restrictions ...

anything goes!

just have a message difficult to decipher

without multiple readings

and an interpretation by a scholarly friend

who will tell you the meaning of what you just read

after you fail to understand it the first six times.

don't dare declare the color of roses or violets

or that they have anything to do with your love for

someone/something/somewhere/somehow

so trite.

rather delve into complex concepts

— god life God death goD relationships gOd taxes —

that the normal human mind cannot comprehend

but attempts and fails daily.

My sensibilities rebel and inside me they well.

I can't resist a rhyming twist.

The siren song of the nuns is strong

To rhyme in 4/4 time

So all can sing along in song

With rhymes that define every line.

As syntax swirls about my head,

My dreams of poet laureate lie dead.