

# Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Om leksikonet: [https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om\\_leksikonet.pdf](https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf)

## Villanelle

(\_sjanger, \_lyrikk) En diktsjanger som opprinnelig ble brukt til diktning om livet på landet. Det latinske “villanus” betyr “landlig”. I nyere tid har det blitt skrevet villaneller om alle tenkelige temaer.

Diktene følger (vanligvis) dette mønsteret for strofer og enderim (ord med samme farge rimer, og understreket og kursiverte rim er identiske):

----- alle  
----- glans  
----- *falle*

----- tralle  
----- stans  
----- alle

----- kalle  
----- sans  
----- *falle*

----- lalle  
----- vanns  
----- alle

----- gjalle  
----- hans  
----- *falle*

----- palle  
----- fillefrans  
----- alle  
----- *falle*

“Denne diktform har et meget strengt strofesystem, som faktisk minner om et fullkomment mineral.” (André Bjerke i et intervju; Elseth 1979 s. 23) Bjerke skrev bl.a. “Villanelle” (1960).

“A villanelle is a poetic form with nineteen lines and a strict pattern of repetition and a rhyme scheme. Each villanelle is comprised of five tercets (i.e., a three-line stanza) followed by one quatrain (a stanza with four lines). The first and third lines of the opening tercet are repeated in an alternating pattern as the final line of each next tercet; those two repeated lines then form the final two lines of the entire poem. The rhyme scheme calls for those repeating lines to rhyme, and for the second line of every tercet to rhyme. Thus, the rhyme scheme looks like this: A1 b A2 / a b A1 / a b A2 / a b A1 / a b A2 / a b A1 A2. Though the structure may sound complicated, in practice it is easy to see how the rules work. The word villanelle comes originally from the Italian word *villano*, meaning “peasant.” The *villanelles* and *villancicos* of the Renaissance period were Italian and Spanish songs made for dancing, which featured the pastoral theme appropriate for peasant dances. The contemporary definition of villanelle thus has changed quite a bit since its conception as a verse without strict rhyme scheme or repetition.” (<http://www.literarydevices.com/villanelle/>; lesedato 31.03.16)

“The villanelle originates from the French and bears a rich historical development. Originally, the villanelle stood as a ballad to imitate the songs of French oral tradition. The fixed poetic form became standard during the 17th century upon the publication of Jean Passerat’s poem “Villanelle” published in 1606. And while the villanelle has its origin in French literature, a majority of villanelles have been written by English-writing poets. Poets such as Oscar Wilde, Andrew Lang, Dylan Thomas, and Elizabeth Bishop are known for using the villanelle. The original form was often used to write pastoral poems, but contemporary poets such as Sylvia Plath and Seamus Heaney have used the villanelle to write outside of the original usage. [...] No established meter exists in the villanelle. However, many 19th century villanelles used trimeter or tetrameter. [...] 20th century, poets used pentameter. Giorgio Venetopoulos wrote a villanelle in iambic pentamete to exhibit the strictness that can be applied to the form. The content discusses the process of writing, and more importantly, the villanelle. [...] poets such as Elizabeth Bishop took took many liberties in her villanelle, which allows the individual aesthetics to come through, as a shadow. [...] The rigid form of the villanelle evokes a sense of obsession and compulsion as the refrains interact with the remaining lines. The form give way to a feeling of dislocation within the content. Moreover, the strict form requires the writer to focus on the form, thus freeing the content within the form. The sense of obsessions and compulsions, even mental dislocation is apparent in Sylvia Plath’s “Mad Girl’s Love Song” ” (S. R. Stewart i <https://medium.com/@nutritionfeminist/a-brief-discussion-on-the-villanelle-a4dc17e4975c>; lesedato 09.08.24).

“The rhyme-and-refrain pattern of the villanelle can be schematized as A1bA2 abA1 abA2 abA1 abA2 abA1A2 where letters (“a” and “b”) indicate the two rhyme sounds, upper case indicates a refrain (“A”), and numerals (1 and 2) indicate Refrain 1 and Refrain 2. The pattern is shown as an example in the poem “Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas, which is the poem most often used as an example of a villanelle:

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

[oversatt til dansk av Ingrid Mejer Jensen:

Gå ikke stiltfærdigt ind i den gode nat,  
Alderdøm skal gnistre og rase, når dagen svinder;  
Ras, ras imod det lys, der bliver mat.

Fordi deres ord aldrig flængede himlen, aldrig fik ret,  
Skønt de, døden nær, godt ved, at mørket vinder,  
Går gamle, kloge mænd ikke stiltfærdigt ind i den gode nat.

Gode mænd, vel ovre den sidste bjergkam, råber som besat  
Op om den beskedne dåd, der kunne have strålet fra tinder,  
Ras, ras imod det lys, der bliver mat.

Og solen, som de indser, at de hele tiden har begrædt,  
Mænd, som har besunget den, grebet efter alt, der skinner,  
Gå ikke stiltfærdigt ind i den gode nat.

Blinde øjne kunne gløde, som meteorer, muntert, brat,  
Men alvorsmænd på gravens rand, og med et blik, der blinder,  
Ras, ras imod det lys, der bliver mat.

Og du, min far, dér på dit sidste højdedrag, forladt,  
Med dine bistre tårer, forband, velsign mig nu, mens lyset svinder.  
Gå ikke stiltfærdigt ind i den gode nat,  
Ras, ras imod det lys, der bliver mat.]

Refrain 1 (A1)  
Line 2 (b)  
Refrain 2 (A2)

Line 4 (a)  
Line 5 (b)  
Refrain 1 (A1)

Line 7 (a)  
Line 8 (b)  
Refrain 2 (A2)

Line 10 (a)  
Line 11 (b)  
Refrain 1 (A1)

Line 13 (a)  
Line 14 (b)  
Refrain 2 (A2)

Line 16 (a)  
Line 17 (b)  
Refrain 1 (A1)  
Refrain 2 (A2)

Unlike many fixed verse poetic forms, the villanelle has no established meter, although most 19th-century villanelles have used trimeter or tetrameter and most 20th-century villanelles have used pentameter. Slight alteration of the refrain line is permissible.

The form started as a simple ballad-like song with no fixed form; this fixed quality would only come much later, from the poem “Villanelle (J’ay perdu ma Tourterelle)” (1606) by Jean Passerat. From this point, its evolution into the “fixed form” used in the present day is debated. Despite its French origins, the majority of villanelles have been written in English, a trend which began in the late nineteenth century. The villanelle has been noted as a form that frequently treats the subject of obsessions, and one which appeals to outsiders; its defining feature of repetition prevents it from having a conventional tone.

In the villanelle’s repetition of lines, the form is often used, and properly used, to deal with one or another degree of obsession, such as in Sylvia Plath’s “Mad Girl’s Love Song” amongst other examples. Repetition allows the possibility for the form to evoke, through the relationship between the repeated lines, a feeling of dislocation and is what some have termed a paradigm for schizophrenia. This repetition of lines has been considered to prevent villanelles from possessing a conventional tone and that instead they are closer in form to a song or lyric poetry. Stephen Fry says that the villanelle “is a form that seems to appeal to outsiders, or those who might have cause to consider themselves as such”, having a “playful artifice” which suits “rueful, ironic reiteration of pain or fatalism.” In spite of this, the villanelle has also often been used for light verse, as for instance Louis Untermeyer’s “Lugubrious Villanelle of Platitudes” or the song by They Might Be Giants called “Hate the Villanelle.”

On the relationship between form and content, Anne Ridler noted in an introduction to her own poem “Villanelle for the Middle of the Way” a point made by T. S. Eliot, that “to use very strict form is a help, because you concentrate on the technical difficulties of mastering the form, and allow the content of the poem a more unconscious and freer release,” which sounds so very Post Modern. In an introduction to his own take on the form entitled “Missing Dates,” William Empson suggested that while the villanelle is a “very rigid form,” W. H. Auden – in his long poem “The Sea and the Mirror” – had nonetheless “made it sound absolutely natural like the innocent girl talking.” (anonym i <http://closetprofessor.blogspot.no/2015/08/a-poetic-lesson-villanelle.html>; lesedato 02.05.18)

“The villanelle (‘rustic song’) [...] is based on an Italian folksong of the late fifteenth century; it flourished from the time of the Pléiade [en gruppe franske diktere på 1500-tallet] until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Like many other French forms it was popularized in English by the group of poets associated with Dobson and Henley. It is, however, one of the few forms that has been adopted by several twentieth-century poets: after Wilde’s ‘Theocritus’ it appeared in E. A. Robinson’s ‘House on a Hill’ and Pound’s ‘Villanelle: The Psychological Hour’. Empson used it in ‘Villanelle’ and ‘Missing Dates’, Auden in ‘My Dear One is Mine’ (*The Sea and the Mirror*) and ‘Time will say nothing but I told you so’. It occurs as late as 1952 in Dylan Thomas’s ‘Do not go gentle into that good night’, a truly excellent poem.” (Häublein 1978 s. 39-40)

“It is believed that the French poet Théodore de Banville defined the form in the late nineteenth century, though villanelles became much more popular in England than it ever did in France. Though the form is quite strict in its rules, it is not all that difficult to write a villanelle; indeed, eight of the nineteen lines are repetitions. The difficulty is in making this repetition seem new or important each time. Many poets have played just a bit with the repetition of lines so that there is a slight change, either in the insertion or deletion of a word, or in changing the tense or punctuation of the repeated lines. The function of the repetition often can seem a bit obsessive, and, indeed, many villanelles center around a central issue a poet is trying to work out in a manner that sounds circular and obsessive. [...] the most famous example of a villanelle of all time: Dylan Thomas’s “Do not go gentle into that good night.” Unlike some other authors, Thomas chose not to alter his repeating lines whatsoever, and we see them reproduced exactly the same in each repetition. The lines in and of themselves are very powerful, and their repetition serves only to make Thomas’s forceful message that much stronger.” (<http://www.literarydevices.com/villanelle/>; lesedato 31.03.16)

“A villanelle is a poetic form which entered English language poetry in the late 1800s from the imitation of French models. Although it is one of the most technically demanding and difficult of all verse-forms, the villanelle has become in the last century one of the most popular forms of English poetry. Traditionally speaking, a villanelle is a poem of 19 lines written in six stanzas. The first stanza of a villanelle is of particular importance, because the first and third lines of the first stanza are alternatively repeated as the last line of each of the following stanzas. In the last stanza, which is four lines in length, both the first and third lines are included as the concluding couplet of the poem. This restraint puts an immense amount of strain on the first and third lines of the poem, as they must be versatile enough to be repeated several times at different points in the poem without becoming redundant or meaningless. Ideally, the repeated lines of the villanelle should be subtle enough that as each line is repeated its meaning continues to change and evolve. In addition to this restraint, the non-repeated lines of the villanelle must rhyme with each other.

Perhaps because of its formal complexity, the villanelle has become a sort of tour-de-force for English poets, and it has remained popular since its introduction in the nineteenth century. A number of poets of distinction have made their attempts at the form and produced beautiful poems in the process, including Elizabeth Bishop, W. H. Auden, and Dylan Thomas. In recent decades, the villanelle has only increased in popularity. Many contemporary poets have made slight adjustments to the form, such as dropping the restriction of 19 lines per poem, or rephrasing the repeated lines slightly with each repetition; all of these changes have only increased the villanelle’s accessibility to modern audiences, and it continues to be one of the most interesting verse-forms in the history of English poetry.

## History of the Form

Many published works mistakenly claim that the strict modern form of the villanelle originated with the medieval troubadours, but in fact medieval and Renaissance villanelles were simple ballad-like songs with no fixed form or length. Such songs were associated with the country and were thought to be sung by farmers and shepherds, in contrast to the more complex madrigals associated with the more sophisticated city and court life. The French word *villanelle* comes from the Italian word *villanella*, which derives from the Latin *villa* (farm) and *villano* (farmhand); to any poet before the mid-nineteenth century, the word *villanelle* or *villanella* would have simply meant “country song,” with no particular form implied. The modern nineteen-line dual-refrain form of the villanelle derives from nineteenth-century admiration of the only Renaissance poem in that form – a poem about a turtledove by Jean Passerat (1534-1602) entitled “Villanelle.” The chief French popularizer of the villanelle form was the nineteenth-century author Théodore de Banville.

## The villanelle in English

Although the villanelle is usually labeled “a French form,” by far the majority of villanelles are in English. Edmund Gosse, influenced by Théodore de Banville, was the first English writer to praise the villanelle and bring it into fashion with his 1877 essay “A Plea for Certain Exotic Forms of Verse.” Gosse, Henry Austin Dobson, Oscar Wilde, and Edwin Arlington Robinson were among the first English practitioners. Most modernists disdained the villanelle, which became associated with the overwrought and sentimental aestheticism and formalism of the 1800s. James Joyce included a villanelle ostensibly written by his adolescent fictional alter-ego Stephen Dedalus in his 1914 novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, probably to show the immaturity of Stephen’s literary abilities. William Empson revived the villanelle more seriously in the 1930s, and his contemporaries and friends W. H. Auden and Dylan Thomas also picked up the form. Dylan Thomas’s “Do not go gentle into that good night” is perhaps the most renowned villanelle of all. Theodore Roethke and Sylvia Plath wrote villanelles in the 1950s and 1960s, and Elizabeth Bishop wrote a particularly famous and influential villanelle, “One Art,” in 1976. The villanelle reached an unprecedented level of popularity in the 1980s and 1990s with the rise of the New Formalism. Since then, many contemporary poets have written villanelles, and they have often varied the form in innovative ways.

## Form

The villanelle has no established meter, although most nineteenth-century villanelles had eight or six syllables per line and most twentieth-century villanelles have ten syllables per line. The essence of the form is its distinctive pattern of rhyme and repetition, with only two rhyme-sounds (“a” and “b”) and two

alternating refrains that resolve into a concluding couplet.” (<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Villanelle>; lesedato 11.04.18)

“Villanelle of His Lady’s Treasures by Ernest Dowson [is] A fin-de-siècle poet’s attempt to retain the beauty of a lost love [...] built around unsettlingly violent imagery[:]

I took her dainty eyes, as well  
As silken tendrils of her hair:  
And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her voice, a silver bell,  
As clear as song, as soft as prayer;  
I took her dainty eyes as well.

It may be, said I, who can tell,  
These things shall be my less despair?  
And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her whiteness virginal  
And from her cheek two roses rare:  
I took her dainty eyes as well.

I said: “It may be possible  
Her image from my heart to tear!”  
And so I made a Villanelle.

I stole her laugh, most musical:  
I wrought it in with artful care;  
I took her dainty eyes as well;  
And so I made a Villanelle.

[...] the performative second refrain-line reminds us that this is a poem talking about poem-making as a cure for pain: “And so I made a villanelle.” No physical savagery has been committed on a living person. That her “dainty eyes” have been “taken” suggests the Lady’s vision of the relationship has been imitated: the writer is re-focusing things from her perspective. The scale and pattern of the villanelle form might suggest some fine, miniature domestic art such as embroidery, also seen in the image of the “silken tendrils of her hair”. It seems unavoidable that the Lady’s vision is felt to be too “dainty” and too small. She has viewed the relationship with her lover as a game, as teasing and frustrating as the “hide-and-seek” versification of the villanelle. So it’s an uncomfortable poem, and an unusually revealing statement of the body-snatching art in which all good writers have to engage.” (Carol Rumens i <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/>



2022/aug/29/poem-of-the-week-villanelle-of-his-ladys-treasures-by-ernest-dowson;  
lesedato 09.08.24)

“In 1914, just before the outbreak of the Great War, Ezra Pound facilitated the publishing of Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the modernist journal *The Egoist*. The novel appeared in serial form in that journal throughout the years 1914-15, and the scene in which Stephen Dedalus awakes at dawn and composes a villanelle was published as a single installment in the July 1, 1915 issue. The installment begins with the sentence “The rain fell faster,” just after Stephen has finishing expounding his aesthetic philosophy to Lynch, and just before Stephen encounters his “beloved,” E. C., near the library. It ends with the full text of the villanelle [...] Joyce seems to have transformed his uncertainty about his own verse to a negative judgment of verse in general as an artistic mode. Joyce’s *Portrait* is nothing if not the chronicle of a young man’s vocational anxieties: all Stephen’s religious, political, and sexual anxieties seem ultimately to be subsumed in the overwhelming question of his artistry. The villanelle that Stephen writes is at the center of all these anxieties, and is one of the results of it. But while Stephen does find some solution to his difficulties by identifying himself as an artist in exile, the kind of art that Stephen produces in the course of *Portrait*, most notably the villanelle, proves inadequate to characterize and ameliorate those anxieties. The inadequacies of the villanelle as an artistic genre produce the desire for an art that will be less inadequate, and thus the mimetic experimental prose style of *Portrait*, *Dubliners*, and *Ulysses* comes to replace outdated forms like the villanelle, and indeed lyric more generally.” (Amanda French i [https://villanelle.amandafrench.net/?page\\_id=160](https://villanelle.amandafrench.net/?page_id=160); lesedato 28.03.23)

“In “Villanelle: The Psychological Hour,” Ezra Pound explores the themes of expectation, disappointment, and the elusive nature of beauty. [...] Pound departs from the standard villanelle structure, introducing additional stanzas and breaks, allowing a modernist interpretation of an otherwise traditional form. [...] Through its repeated lines and cyclical structure, the poem itself becomes a metaphor for the recurring nature of these themes in our lives.” (<https://www.poetryexplorer.net/exp.php?id=10116512>; lesedato 26.03.25)

“This French syllabic form has no set number of syllables per line; common choices seem to be between eight and eleven. (English versions of the villanelle sometimes appear in accentual syllabics, featuring a perennial favorite, iambic pentameter.) The villanelle carries a pattern of only two rhymes, and is marked most distinctively by its alternating refrain, which appears initially in the first and third lines of the opening tercet. In all, it comprises five tercets and a concluding quatrain. Before the villanelle was made literary by the French in the late 1500s, it existed as a villanella, “an old Italian folk song with an accompanying dance.” [...] The word villanelle, or villenesque, was used toward the end of the sixteenth century to describe literary imitations of rustic songs. Such villanelles were alike in exhibiting a refrain which testified to their ultimate popular origin. The villanelle

was, in a sense, invented by Jean Passerat (1534-1602). [...] Passerat's poem about a turtledove is said to be the singular originator of the scheme [...] It is useful to describe the villanelle as a form in which power resides in the interplay of constant (repeating) and variable elements ... a major challenge of the villanelle: packing the second through fifth tercets with appropriately varied and dense material that 'balances' and justifies the repeated material." (Mandy Michno og Matt Jolly i <http://www.public.asu.edu/~aarios/formsofverse/reports2000/page8.html>; lesedato 10.05.13)

"Author Philip K. Jason sees the villanelle as presenting a three-part structure of meaning: "introduction, development, and conclusion ... this tendency for the material to split into three sections gives the villanelle form an affinity with basic cognitive and expository processes. Technically, the three parts derive from the relative weight and position of the repeating lines." Also in this vein, he discusses the idea that the villanelle lends itself nicely to "duality, dichotomy, and debate." [...] On the relation of form to function, Jason asserts that "the villanelle is often used, and properly used, to deal with one or another degree of obsession." He takes this interpretation rather seriously, saying that "There is even the potential for the two repeating lines to form a paradigm for schizophrenia ... The mind may not fully know itself or its subject, may not be in full control, and yet it still tries, still festers and broods in a closed room towards a resolution that is at least pretended by the final couplet linking of the refrain lines." [...] from "Modern Versions of the Villanelle," by Philip K. Jason. *College Literature*, 1980." (Mandy Michno og Matt Jolly i <http://www.public.asu.edu/~aarios/formsofverse/reports2000/page8.html>; lesedato 10.05.13)

"In "Rhythmic Villanelle," Theophile Gautier explores the renewing powers of spring as it serves as a backdrop to the timeless theme of love. Written during the 19th century, Gautier's poem encapsulates the romantic spirit, which goes hand in hand with nature's cycles and romantic love's enduring qualities. Here, the changing seasons are not just meteorological phenomena but also symbolize the various stages and moods of love. The poem brilliantly utilizes the villanelle form, a highly structured poetic form [...] the poem deviates from the traditional villanelle form, making it a unique adaptation." (<https://www.poetryexplorer.net/exp.php?id=10062047>; lesedato 26.03.25)

Den irske forfatteren Oscar Wildes "Pan: Double Villanelle" (1880) "is a two-part poem which bizarrely compares the classical pastoral scene with glum modern England, and then with Renaissance England, in a strange assortment of references and contradictions which leave the reader unsure of the exact kind of "Hellenic ideal" Wilde is advocating [...] Wilde had already acknowledged Theocritus as the creator of the enchanting pastoral world in "Theocritus: A Villanelle": indeed, "Pan: Double Villanelle" might be a variation on a theme. The villanelle itself, a French form of lyric verse, pays homage to the pastoral genre, "villa" being Latin

for a country house or farm.” (<http://oscholars-oscholars.com/may-i-say/jessica-contents/jessica-i-ii/>; lesedato 18.05.15)

“Pan: Double Villanelle” “reflects Wilde’s mastery of the villanelle form, invoking the Greek god Pan as a symbol of nature, joy, and freedom, in contrast to the perceived drabness and restriction of the modern world. [...] The poem is divided into two parts. In the first part, Wilde laments the loss of the spirit of Pan – and by extension, the loss of nature, freedom, and joy – in the modern world, which is described as “grey and old”. The speaker mourns the absence of Pan’s “soft brown limbs” and “beard of gold”, along with the joyous environment that surrounded him. The tone is one of loss and sorrow. In the second part, the speaker urges Pan to leave Arcady and come to the modern world, which is in dire need of his vibrant energy. The speaker acknowledges that the modern world lacks the mythic beings – nymphs and fauns – associated with Pan, and the tone shifts to one of yearning and desire. [...] Repetition, a feature of the villanelle form, is used effectively by Wilde to underline the sense of loss in the first part and the desperate call for Pan’s return in the second. [...] It’s a powerful call for a return to nature, to joy, and to freedom, encapsulated in the plea for the Goat-foot God of Arcady to abandon his hills and grace the modern world with his presence.” (<https://www.poetryexplorer.net/exp.php?id=10141419>; lesedato 26.03.25)

“ “Theocritus; A Villanelle” by Oscar Wilde “adheres to the villanelle structure perfectly. The two refrains are “O Singer of Persephone!” and “Dost thou remember Sicily?”, and these two lines alternate as the final line of each stanza, before appearing together as the final two lines of the quatrain that concludes the poem. The poem is an invocation to Theocritus, an ancient Greek bucolic poet who is known for his idylls, poems that depict pastoral scenes and the dialogue of shepherds. By invoking Theocritus, Wilde effectively communicates his nostalgia and yearning for the pastoral world that Theocritus depicts in his poetry. The recurring refrain “Dost thou remember Sicily?” carries a note of longing and invokes the images of Sicily’s natural beauty, the place where Theocritus wrote his idylls, and which becomes synonymous with an idyllic, pastoral world. The other recurring line “O Singer of Persephone!” refers to Theocritus’s poetry about Persephone, the Greek goddess associated with the change of seasons and the bounties of agriculture, further deepening the pastoral theme. Throughout the poem, Wilde utilizes various references to Greek mythology and Theocritus’s own works [...] Each repetition deepens the sense of longing and serves to build a rhythm that echoes the cyclical nature of pastoral life and the changing of seasons, a common theme in Theocritus’s poetry.” (<https://www.poetryexplorer.net/exp.php?id=10032750>; lesedato 26.03.25)

“ “Equations of a Villanelle” by Howard Nemerov is a contemplative poem that elegantly intertwines the themes of breath, wind, thought, and the interconnectedness of life. Through the structured form of a villanelle, Nemerov explores the seamless and often unnoticed exchanges between the internal and

external worlds, suggesting a profound unity between our inner experiences and the outer universe. [...] “The breath within us and the wind without” and “To say the same is true of world and thought” recur throughout the poem, emphasizing the cyclical and interconnected nature of these elements. The repetition creates a rhythmic and meditative quality, inviting the reader to reflect deeply on the poem’s central ideas. [...] Through its elegant language and philosophical depth, the poem encourages readers to consider the invisible yet essential exchanges that shape our lives and our understanding of the world.” (<https://www.poetryexplorer.net/exp.php?id=12389214>; lesedato 26.03.25)

“ “Energy: A Villanelle” by John Updike uses the structured form of a villanelle to explore the complexities and consequences of human energy consumption, particularly focusing on fossil fuels. The villanelle form, known for its repeating lines and strict pattern, serves as an apt metaphor for the cyclical and often unchanging nature of societal reliance on non-renewable energy sources. Through this structure, Updike highlights both the enduring allure and the increasing costs of this dependence. The poem begins with the line, “The oil rigs in Bahrain imply a buyer / who counts no cost, when all is said and done.” This opening sets the stage by pointing out the global nature of the oil industry and its seemingly inexhaustible demand. The phrase “who counts no cost” suggests a reckless disregard for the broader implications of oil consumption, focusing solely on the immediate benefits of energy extraction without considering its long-term sustainability or environmental impact. [...] The refrain, “Nothing is lost but, still, the cost grows higher,” is particularly evocative. It plays on the law of conservation of energy (that in a closed system, energy is neither lost nor created) while ironically commenting on the economic, environmental, and social costs that continue to escalate despite the apparent abundance of energy. This refrain encapsulates the paradox of modern energy consumption: the more we use, the more we seem to lose in other, less quantifiable ways. The imagery of the “leaden night draws nigher / when cinders mark where stood the blazing sun” is a stark warning about the possible apocalyptic consequences of unchecked energy consumption. This could be interpreted as a metaphor for environmental degradation leading to a darkened, polluted world where the sun is no longer visible, or more figuratively, a future where the natural world and its resources have been significantly diminished. The poem closes with a repetition of earlier lines, reinforcing the cyclical theme and the seeming inevitability of the current trajectory of energy usage. The villanelle’s form – with its repetitive, circling nature – mirrors the ongoing cycle of consumption and the recurring warnings about its sustainability.” (<https://www.poetryexplorer.net/exp.php?id=10017203>; lesedato 26.03.25)

“Elizabeth Bishop’s famous example of villanelle, “One Art,” [1976] is slightly looser with the rules, though she does stick to them fairly closely. For example, the lines that end with the word “disaster” have only that final word in common, and are quite different leading up to the word. Bishop is also a bit freer with the rhyming words, choosing half rhyme rather than perfect rhyme in some cases. For

example, she choose near rhymes for “disaster” such as “fluster,” “last, or,” and “gesture.” Similarly “intent” and “continent” have the same final vowel and consonant combination, yet the stress pattern of “continent” makes it not a perfect rhyme for “intent.” Still, Bishop has chosen the villanelle form for a reason. She builds up to the final quatrain with insisting that “the art of losing isn’t hard to master,” yet it’s clear that there is some verbal irony here and that it is indeed difficult to lose a loved one. [...] Theodore Roethke’s poem “The Waking” [1953] is another famous and lovely example of a villanelle. He is somewhere between Thomas and Bishop in terms of how closely he sticks to the villanelle rules. Generally his lines rhyme with either “slow” or “fear,” though he also chooses near rhymes of “you,” “how,” “do” and “there,” “stair,” and “air.” He also slightly varies the second repeating line of “I learn by going where I have to go.” ” (<http://www.literarydevices.com/villanelle/>; lesedato 31.03.16)

“ “The Waking,” a villanelle by American poet Theodore Roethke, reflects on the unknowability of the future as well as the beauty of feeling and intuition. The poem’s philosophical, almost aphoristic statements – such as “I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow” and “I learn by going where I have to go” – suggest the value of taking life slowly, trusting one’s intuitions, and learning by doing. Roethke published “The Waking” as the title piece of his 1953 collection, *The Waking: Poems 1933-1953*, and it has proved one of his most popular and enduring poems. [...] In “The Waking,” the speaker muses on the paradoxical nature of life and death and embraces the fact that the future is ultimately mysterious. People find out where they’re “going” in life only by taking chances and discovering along the way whatever they need to “learn.” In this way, the poem suggests, life is a perpetual process of “waking” up to everything around and inside us. There’s no road map for the future; the only thing one can really do is “slow” down and appreciate the mystery of it all.” (<https://www.litcharts.com/poetry/theodore-roethke/the-waking>; lesedato 05.06.24)

Andre eksempel:

Joseph Boulmier: *Villanelle* (1879)

Andrew Lang: “Villanelle (To M. Joseph Boulmier, author of ‘Les Villanelles’)” (1885)

Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle: “Villanelle” (1895)

Edwin Arlington Robinson: “The House on the Hill” (1922) og “Villanelle of Change”

Andrew Langs “Villanelle” “depicts the mythological story of Apollo tending sheep for Theocritus, a mortal poet from Syracuse. The repetitive structure emphasizes the intertwined fates of the immortal and mortal, suggesting that their

works will endure together. [...] In the context of its time period, the poem reflects the Victorian fascination with classical mythology and the idyllic pastoral. It pays homage to Theocritus's bucolic poetry while acknowledging the enduring legacy of both the ancient muse and the mortal poet. By juxtaposing Apollo's divine status with Theocritus's humble existence, Lang suggests that true artistic inspiration transcends mortal limitations." (<https://allpoetry.com/poem/8527429-Villanelle-by-Andrew-Lang>; lesedato 09.08.24)

Den amerikanske dikteren Marilyn Hacker har skrevet noen villaneller som er inkludert i samlingen *Presentation Piece* (1974).

"When teaching poetry writing workshops to classical autistics, I invariably ask them to write a villanelle. The first time I did so, I was astonished at how quickly and effectively they managed the task; in the same amount of time, my "control group" of nonautistic education professors managed maybe six or seven of the required nineteen lines. One autistic claimed that the form itself was autistic – its perseverative, morphing refrains were "like the patterns of light on her front lawn," she typed. [...] [Tito Rajarshi] Mukhopadhyay's most recent book of poems, *I Am Not a Poet, But I Write Poetry*, contains three villanelles and a number of pantoums." (Ralph James Savarese i <http://www.lisazunshine.net/>; lesedato 10.03.16) Mukhopadhyay ble født i India i 1989 og fikk som barn diagnosen autisme.

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