**Quoting Poetry**

Quoting poetry in your writing is a bit trickier than quoting prose. Style guides (like MLA) tell us more about quoting poetry, but this handout goes over the basics.

**Follow these simple rules when quoting and citing poetry.**

1) Put the titles of poems in quotation marks: “Ars Poetica”

2) When you quote exact words, phrases, or lines from poems, set the quotations off with quotation marks and cite the line from which the textual material comes in parentheses at the end of the sentence containing it. Punctuate your sentence — that is, put your punctuation mark outside the end parenthesis.

*Ex.: According to the poem, “tender is the night” (35).*

3) When you quote consecutive lines of poetry (lines that follow each other in the poem), use a virgule (/) to indicate where the lines “break” (are separated) in the poem. Then, in your parenthetical citation, list the first and last line quoted, separating them with a hyphen (dash).

*Ex.: According to the poem, “tender is the night, / And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne, / Cluster’d around by all her starry Fays” (35-37).*

4) When you quote four or more consecutive lines of poetry, use “long quotation” or “blockquote” formatting. Introduce the quotation with a short signal phrase; begin the quotation on the following line; indent the quotation twice; double space; punctuate exactly as in the text; cite lines parenthetically at the very end, outside the final punctuation. Do not punctuate the parenthetical citation.

*Ex.: The poem describes the night thus:*

*… tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Cluster’d around by all her starry Fays;  
But here there is no light … (35-38)*

5) When you use quoted material from multiple lines but do not quote those lines consecutively, put a comma between the line numbers in your parenthetical citation and make sure the order of the line numbers in the parentheses corresponds to the order of the quoted material in the sentence.

*Ex.: The speaker tells us that, “tender is the night”; however, “here there is no light” (35, 38).*

6) Do everything else as you would if you were quoting prose. Use ellipses (three dots) to show where you have removed words (ex. *“on the … wings of Poesy” (33).*). Use brackets to show where you have made minor adjustments to grammar (ex. *The speaker states that “Darkling [he listens]” (51).*).

7) Remember that as a writer you get to decide where to begin and end quoting the text: cut off quotations before awkward, unnecessary punctuation marks.

*Ex.: The poem states that, “haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne” (36).  
NOT: The poem states that, “haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,” (36).*

8) Always proofread quotations: double-check that your quotations are accurate and that you have not made any changes to the text in transcribing it into your paper.