Villanelle
The first line will repeat at later times,
The second line will end quite differently.
The third repeats again in other rhymes.

As you begin, see how the wording chimes
This alternating rhythm, and now see,
The first line will repeat at later times.

Continue now, and notice how betimes
Constrained in form, it's also somewhat free.
The third repeats again in other rhymes.

Swinging forth from simples to sublimes,
The villanelle flows forth most ardently.
The first line will repeat at later times

To master this could take a few lifetimes,
Lost in this poetic reverie,
The third repeats again in other rhymes.

Almost done now, watch as wording climbs
Into this quatrain, ending pleasantly,
The first line will repeat at later times.
The third repeats again in other rhymes.
One Art

By Elizabeth Bishop

The art of losing isn’t hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn’t hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother’s watch. And look! My last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn’t hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn’t a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan’t have lied. It’s evident
the art of losing’s not too hard to master
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.
The Grammar Lesson

A noun’s a thing. A verb’s the thing it does.
An adjective is what describes the noun.
In “The can of beets is filled with purple fuzz”

*of* and *with* are prepositions. *The’s*
An article, a *can’s* a noun,
A noun’s a thing. A verb’s the thing it does.

A can *can* roll—or not. What isn’t was
Or might be, *might* meaning not yet known.
“Our can of beets *is* filled with purple fuzz”

is present tense. While words like our and us
Are pronouns—i.e. *it* is moldy, *they* are icky brown.
A noun’s a thing; a verb’s the thing it does.

*Is* is a helping verb. It helps because
*filled* isn’t a full verb. *Can’s* what *our* owns
in “Our can of beets is filled with purple fuzz.”

See? There’s almost nothing to it. Just
Memorize these rules…or write them down!
A noun’s a thing; a verb’s the thing it does.
The can of beets is filled with purple fuzz.
Villanelle for the Middle of the Night

Call it the refrigerator’s hum at night,
The even breathing of a sleeping house
As a halo drifts in from a corner streetlight.

Awake, you train an ear to single out
A music jangling just beneath the noise.
Call it the refrigerator’s hum at night.

Since you have no real hope of being accurate,
But what you mean is usually as diffuse
As a halo drifting from a corner streetlight.

Tonight, though, it is concentrated, intimate,
Luring you to store up what it says
(Call it the refrigerator’s hum at night;
That, at least, accommodates the feel of it)
To try to temper yearning into praise,
As a halo drifting from a corner streetlight

Tempts an unsuspecting city street
With its otherworldly armory of shadows.
*Call it* the refrigerator’s hum at night,
*Call it back.* *It’s drifting* mourns the streetlight.
The Waking        by Theodore Roethke
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do
To you and me; so take the lively air,
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps my steady. I should know.
What falls away is always. And is near.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I learn by going where I have to go.
The Story We Know  
by Martha Collins

The way to begin is always the same. Hello, Hello. Your hand, your name. So glad, Just fine, and Good-bye at the end. That’s every story we know.

and why pretend? But lunch tomorrow? No? Yes? An omelette, salad, chilled white wine? The way to begin is simple, sane, Hello,

and then it’s Sunday, coffee, the Times, a slow day by the fire, dinner at eight or nine and Good-bye. In the end, this is the story we know.

so well we don’t turn the page, or look below the picture, or follow the words to the next line: The way to begin is always the same Hello.

But one night, through the latticed window, snow begins to whiten the air, and the tall white pine. Good-bye is the end of every story we know

that night, and when we close the curtains, oh, we hold each other against the cold white sign of the way we all begin and end. Hello, Good-bye is the only story. We know, we know.
The Man in the Recreation Room  Edward Harkness

The man in the recreation room is screaming again. From season to graveside the mood turns blue. How unhappy. How his mind moves dreaming something blue with passion: three wings combing space beyond a valley. What a view!
The man in the recreation room is screaming.

His hands have a mind of their own. He’s palming a gravestone. The moon has nothing to do. How unhappy. How his mind moves dreaming beyond a blue valley. His wings are flaming. He’s afraid his plans have fallen through, the man in the recreation room is screaming.

Past apples another starlight tries claiming his eyesight. Lilacs die. All untrue. How unhappy now? His mind moves dreaming his hands slowly become his feet. The humming in his head grows beautiful. Just for you the man in the recreation room is screaming. How unhappy. How his mind moves dreaming.
Newspoto: Basra, Collateral Damage

[Epigraph:] Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators. –General F.S. Maude, commander of the British colonial forces in Iraq, 1914

Apparently the little girl is dead.
In Basra, bombed to rubble by the Yanks,
her stricken father cradles her small head.

Her right foot dangles, ghastly, by a thread.
Cluster bombs & F-16s & tanks.
That is to say the little girl is dead

whose fingers curl (small hand brushed with blood)
as if to clutch his larger hand. He drinks
her—sobbing—in, & cradles her small head,

& rocks her in his arms, the final bed
but one in which she’ll lie. The father clings,
as if his broken daughter were not dead,

her face, as if in sleep, becalmed, but red,
bloodied, bruised. At bottom left, the ranks
of those still dying die behind her head.

Legions of the Lords of Plunder: the dread
angel of empire offers you thanks!
Look, if you dare! See? The child is dead.
Her stricken father cradles her small head.