

Rhyme's Reason: A Guide to English Verse

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Poems by the author complement a guide to writing English verse, surveying the forms and patterns of Old English and looking at an assortment of contemporary styles of free verse

In the grand tradition of Alexander Pope, John Hollander offers this explication/enactment of poetic form. There are sonnets about how to write sonnets, haiku about how to write haiku, and so on. The writing is clever, entertaining, and instructive, which will surprise no one familiar with Hollander's work. What's even more impressive, though, is how often these poems--which could so easily start to feel like homework--engage you emotionally. The sestina about sestinas is beautiful, and, excepting Dylan Thomas's "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night," Hollander's villanelle about villanelles is as captivating an example as one will find of the old French fixed form. A pre-eminent American poet, John Hollander has written over sixteen volumes of poetry. He has also published several works of literary criticism and has edited numerous anthologies, including the Oxford Anthology of English Literature. His many honors include the Bollingen Prize, the Levinson Prize, and a MacArthur Fellowship. *Rhyme's Reason* won the Mina P. Shaughnessy Award from the Modern Language Association when it was first published. John Hollander is currently Sterling Professor of English at Yale University.

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