

Quatrains

Quatrains In Sequence- Not Rhymed

Handling Names

At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The grass is hand-clipped.
Mowers flick pebbles
which pit names
on the black granite panels.

Survivors rub names
penciled white on paper for emptied hands.
They bear unburied memories, grief and gift
want to touch.

Haunting names carved clear-cut,
pale white through night-black, whole
today face a faint moon with an erased
edge in a blue sky unencumbered by clouds.

Quatrains In Sequence- Rhymed

The Crafter

If I must carve
my life in poems
I'll cut twig flutes
not totems.

If I must slice
words paper thin.
I'll wave ink like
an ocean.

If I must sculpt
my mental metal,
I'll weld to its core
a petal.

If I must mold
all thoughts as clay,
I'll fire fingers
for play.

Quatrains in Sequence with a Refrain

Planning Commission Meeting

The mannikin men are called to order.
The gavel's lowered; their lips sealed smiles.
Minutes ready to scratch the surface.
All with a stroke of a ball point pen,

Click...click
click...click

She sits up close to the city's models,
eyes rolling as marbles in play,
lips a scythe, nerves wired,
adjusting hearing aid for static...static

click...click

Her home was yellow, mellowed warm
brushed by trees, paletted by garden,
sidewalk cracks tufted green
edges trimmed with clippers

click...click

Then porched, alone, picker not planter—
family albumed, pocketbook pinched,
past tending time, she must sell out.
Sold—in a snap of heels

click...click

“The lot is in a changing neighborhood
The sidewalk is cracked, the area rundown.
We need more multi-family units.
Re-zone it apartments. All in favor...”

click...click

Ears megaphoning in their ayes,
quivering her needles, supple swords to her bag.
eyes glassing these store window men,
she stumbles to the door.

click...click

Single Quatrain a-a-b-b Built on Couplets

Chips Off the Old Block

Maturing for many is a series of culture shocks,
the chiseling of conscience into un-square blocks.
Corners cut, weakened, stonily rolling they go
sculpted in the end—a hollow zero.

Three Quatrains with a-b-c-b Pattern

The Out-To-Lunch Bunch

The meal between lunch and breakfast
is properly called a brunch.
But the meal between lunch and supper
is it a lupper or sunch?

It is not really dinner
so not a linner or dunch.
More hardy than a snack
it is not a snupper or snunch.

While crunching and slupping
somehow I have a hunch
as long as the downers hit uppers
it does not matter...munch.

Quatrain Alone:

Angel Quatrain for Christmas

Angels we have heard on high
whine about our air supply.
Coughing in polluted air
declare, "Let's get the hell out of there!"

Quatrains are very versatile. They can stand alone, combine into stanzas, weave with other stanzas like couplets, they can rhyme or not, have a metrical or syllable count or not. They are handy to frame a poem.