

SIGHTED RHYMES, SANK SAME

EDMUND CONTI
Summit, New Jersey

Sight rhymes are rhymes that look like rhymes. They have the same ending letters that you would find in rhyming words but, alas, the combinations of letters are pronounced differently. Such is the nature of the of the English language.

Let me give you a few examples of sight rhyme. (You don't have to take notes. I won't ask you to write any poems using sight rhymes. If you hang around, that's what I will do.) Most, cost. Four, sour. Toot, foot. Wood, food. Was, has. And, of course, the always popular and ever daunting cough, bough, though, through. Enough?

Poetry has an oral tradition. At least, that's what the poets tell us. Or should I say "the poets"? So, if poetry is going to be recited, sight rhymes are not going to work. However these same poets also tell us that rhyming is an affectation of a previous millennium. The problem is that rhyming is almost essential if you want to memorize a poem. Who of us here would have been able to rice "The Walrus and the Carpenter" if it didn't rhyme? And while you're trying to remember how that poem begins, thereby negating my theory, let us move on...

What's that? Oh, OK—

The sun was shining on the sea / Shining with all its might
And did its very best to make / The billows smooth and bright

Anyway, poetry is also read quietly. To oneself. You hardly ever see it being recited over a cell phone. ("Hi, I'm on the bus. I got out of work early.")

And this was odd because it was / The middle of the night.

Well, if we're going to talk about sight rhymes, you might as well see some. And you might as well see them here. Because no editor will every publish them. You know they don't like rhymes and what they like even less are poems that are self-referential.

SIGHT RHYMES	SEE WHAT I MEAN?	SIGHT RHYMES, WITH PLIGHT
Some are zany.	Keats and Yeats	There's no valor
Not that many.	Used sight rhymes at times.	In squalor.

By now you've figured out that this rather pointless (and rhymeless) article must be—as all pointless and rhymeless articles usually are—a segue to something I really want to say. But you would be wrong. It is merely a segue to these final poems:

RED, WHITE AND BLUE CLERIHEWS (with one atrocious sight rhyme)

Eric the Red	E.B. White	Vida Blue
Discovered America, it's said	Knew how to write.	Do you remember who
(Or was it the other one,	He would flow when Strunk would ebb. He was?	
His son?)	And, besides, was the first on the Web.	He pitched for the A's.