Poetry Terms Quiz Practice

Next to each example, list the literary term or terms you see used in it. Answers will be posted online this weekend.

1. “Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak weary.”
   Dreary/weary is an example of both internal rhyme (the rhyming words fall within a single line) and feminine rhyme (DREAM-y/WEAR-y). The second half of the line is also an example of alliteration: while, weak, weary.

2. “On the morrow, he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before / Then the bird said ‘Nevermore.’”
   “Hopes have flown” is an example of personification; hope cannot really fly. Before/Nevermore is masculine rhyme (the rhyme falls only on the last syllable of both words) and end rhyme.

3. “I think that I shall never see / A poem as lovely as a tree.”
   See/tree is an example of masculine rhyme (single syllable) and end rhyme. These two lines are also an example of enjambment; the sentence continues from one line to the next. The second half of the line – “A poem as lovely as a tree” – is a simile which compares a poem to a tree using the word “as.”

4. Kindergarteners must learn their ABCs
   “ABCs” is an example of synecdoche. Remember, synecdoche means using a part to represent the whole. This sentence uses “ABCs” to represent the alphabet.

5. You could have knocked me over with a feather.
   This sentence demonstrates hyperbole – extreme exaggeration.

6. She’s not the brightest bulb in the tanning bed.
   This sentence demonstrates litotes. By saying she’s “not” the brightest bulb, the writer means to indicate that she is the opposite, or “dim.” This sentence is also an example of a metaphor; it compares her to a bulb without using the words like or as.

7. “For life’s not a paragraph / and death I think is no parenthesis.”
   This sentence demonstrates litotes. It suggests what life and death are by indicating what they are not. It’s also an example of metaphor. It compares life to a paragraph and death to a parenthesis without using the words like or as. Notice that litotes can often be an example of metaphor as well (see #6 & #7). Lastly, these lines also demonstrate enjambment since the sentence spans two lines.

8. Janet Jackson experienced a wardrobe malfunction during the Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show.
   This sentence demonstrates euphemism by terming the incident in which Justin Timberlake exposed Janet Jackson’s chest as a “wardrobe malfunction.”

9. “Don’t delay dawn’s disarming display.”
   This sentence demonstrates alliteration – repetition of the “d” sound. It also demonstrates both internal rhyme and masculine rhyme (delay/display).

10. “The moan of doves in immemorial elms, / And murmuring of innumerable bees.”
    This sentence demonstrates alliteration – repetition of the “m” sound. It also demonstrates enjambment – a single thought spanning more than one line. Lastly, it subtly demonstrates onomatopoeia. The repetition of the “m” sound throughout the line mimics the murmuring of the bees.
11. “Busy old fool, unruly sun, / Why dost thou thus, / Through windows, and through curtains call on us?”
   
   This sentence demonstrates alliteration – repetition of the “th” sound. The first line demonstrates apostrophe with a direct address of the sun. The rest of the line personifies the sun giving it the ability to look through windows and call on people. It demonstrates enjambment – a single thought that spans several lines. Lastly, it shows both end rhyme and masculine rhyme (thus/us).

12. “Oh my love’s like a red, red rose / That’s newly sprung in June.”
   
   This line is an example of a simile. It compares love to a rose using the word “like.” It’s also an example of alliteration (“love’s like” and “red, red rose”). It also demonstrates enjambment.

13. “He was eager to help, but his legs were rubber.”
   “His legs were rubber” is an example of metaphor. It compares his legs to rubber without using the words like or as.

14. “Fear knocked on the door. Faith answered. There was no one there.”
   
   These lines demonstrate personification. It gives human qualities to both fear and faith. It also demonstrates alliteration (repetition of the “f” sound in “fear” and “faith”).

15. The White House asked the television networks for air time on Monday night.
   
   This sentence demonstrates metonymy. Metonymy replaces one thing with another thing or concept closely related to it. The “white house” did not literally ask TV networks for air time; the president did. This sentence uses the term “white house” in place of something with which it is closely related – the president and his staff.

16. “Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairytales once again.”
   
   This sentence is an example of paradox. On the surface, it appears contradictory, but if you look closer, it makes some sense. Fairytales are meant for children, so it doesn’t make sense that you will be “old enough” to read fairytales one day. However, if you look closer, you might say that adults can take more away from fairytales than children.

17. Gentlemen, you can’t fight in here! This is the War Room.
   
   These sentences are an example of irony. You would expect that the War Room is a place for fighting, but that’s not the case.

18. "Those images that yet / Fresh images beget, / That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea."
   
   These lines are an example of assonance – repetition of the “e” sound in “yet/fresh/beget” and the “o” sound in “dolphin-tom/gong-tormented.” It’s also an example of enjambment, end rhyme and masculine rhyme (yet/beget).