

Poetry for The Great Fire

Haiku

Bright tongues lick night sky,
Belching smoke, coughing sparks high;
Consuming the streets.

Free Verse

Fingers clawing,
Scraping the city and rending street after street,
Grasping for new buildings to claim.
Glowing, striking orange and red,
With yellow-white tips flicking up into the sky,
Flicking.
Flickering.
Flashing in micro-explosions as wood hisses and pops,
Dry as a bone,
London left like a graveyard,
Barely-standing skeletons of what life once was.
When the beast dies, leaving the last trails of smoke,
Look on the scene, and remember the fury that ignorance awoke.

Limerick

London quickly was filling with flames,
Sparks were hissing as they hit the Thames,
'Who did it?' folks cried,
(Only six or so died),
And old Tom is who everyone blames!

Shakespearean Sonnet

Embers glowing silently at bedtime,
Farriner, the baker, never saw it,
The spark which flew from fire to fuel so prime,
Bore a blaze so great we can't ignore it,
Scorching, crackling, gorging on wood,
The long summer had dried the city's walls,
Smoke clung and cloaked the town like Death's own hood,
Hear screams and cries as every building falls.
For days on end the blaze sacked the city,
The citizens distraught and seeking peace,
A sacrifice was made with no pity:
A swathe of homes destroyed to make it cease,
The fire died, though the remnants burned for weeks,
A warning left in time for him who seeks.

Acrostic

The city was not well planned;
Houses built, stacked higher,
Ever closer to one another.
Grabbing space in London, the push for more, left a
Recipe for the perfect feast for fire.
Everyone ignored the regulations meant for safety,
'Ah, no one else obeys them!'
The attitude filling London was
Fuel.
Ignition, so small, so insignificant,
Revealed the risks the city ignored,
Every street a fuse waiting to be lit.
Onward! Onward!
Fire, driven on by the wind,
Like an army let in through the gates,
Overwhelmed the city.
No one is richer or poorer when faced with fire,
Destruction does not care for social class,
Only for the fuel to feed its hunger.
No lessons learned; still fires come to pass.

In the haiku, which part of the body does the poet use to personify the fire? What is the effect of this?

The free verse poem has no rhymes until the final two lines. What is the effect of finishing the poem with a rhyming couplet?

How does the free verse poet use death imagery to move from burning wood to the ruins the fire leaves behind?

Is the limerick more or less serious than the other poems?

What other word or phrase could you use instead of 'bore' in the sonnet?

Why does the word 'sacked' make it sound as though the fire is like an invading army?

What is the message spelled out by the acrostic poem?

Which is your favourite of these poems? Why?