

More than one student has come to me with what he or she has perceived as the dreaded assignment of writing a villanelle. (Go to my PEOPLE page and click on the box that says VILLANELLE for information about this form.) Every single one has, to use as a model, the magnificent villanelle by Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" --- reproduced below, for your pleasure.

It is usually at this point that I present the student with an outline to follow, one that includes the rhyme scheme (ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABAA) as well as the repetition of the first and third lines at specific places in the poem *and the necessity* to make those two repeated lines so strong that each can stand alone as a stanza's concluding line.

This seems pretty clear to me ... but I still meet with resistance, with cries of insecurity, with creative anguish.

To illustrate that it is not impossible for students to create and develop their own villanelles, I determined to use humor. I wrote a villanelle about a person who did not want to write a villanelle. By reading it, one will learn what the requirements of this form of poetry are -- hopefully --- and one will get a good albeit submerged laugh at the same time.

The important thing is that it should lead to the creation of another student villanelle, and the world cannot get enough of such gems!

**Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night** by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.