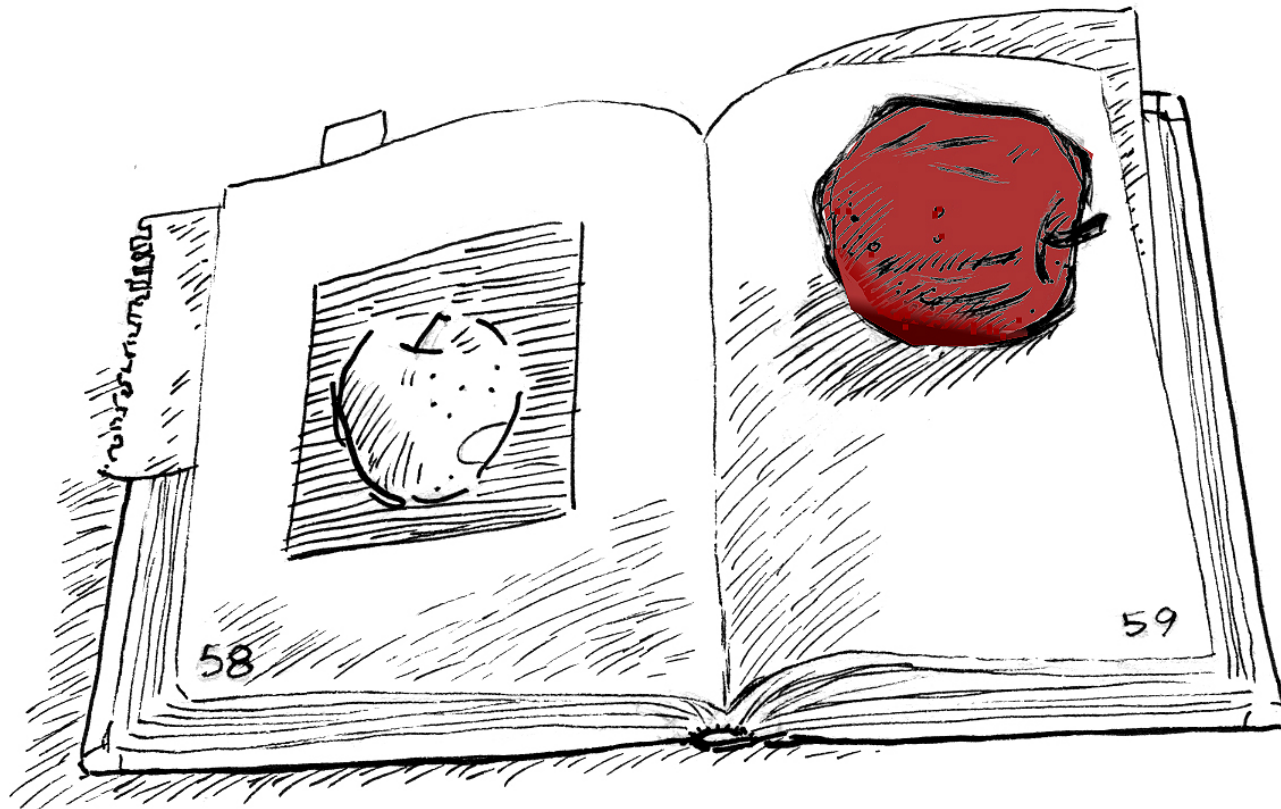


Lyrical Ballads



Lyrical Ballads

Overview:

- Lyrics from ballads are the beginnings of poetry; modern verse began as a natural transition from music lyrics in early centuries of English language.
- Ballads were particularly characteristic of British and Irish popular song *and* poetry from the later medieval period until the 19th century.
- American murder ballads are often versions of older Old World ballads.
- Like folk tales and fables, this form of art describes worlds of reality outside of reality. They seem surreal and illogical because they are based on a story known only to the listeners in past centuries.
- Traditionally these were composed by people who were not literate, nor knowledgeable in formal music methods. They created their instruments by hand: penny whistles, fifes, fiddles, drums, bagpipes.

Lyrical Ballads

Specific themes:

- Folk Stories
- Drinking / Pub songs
- Sports
- Murder
- Love-< Lost Love or Found Love

Westron Wynde

Lost Love Ballad

This is an example of a 16th century lyric with an anonymous author;
contains a very terse, minimalist rhyme.

Follows the rhyme formula ABCB.

Meter: 3.5 / 3 / 4.5 / 3.5

Middle English spellings:

Westron wynde, when wilt thou blow?

(alliteration)

(Then) the small raine— down can raine.

(i.e.: can rain down)

Cryst, if my love were in my armes

And I in my bedde again!’

Murder Ballads

Murder ballad—is a sub genre where a song is based on a violent situation.

Some modern equivalents:

“The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia”

“Ballad of Davey Crockett”

“Frankie and Johnny”

“Mack the Knife”

“Bohemian Rhapsody”

“Cocaine Blues”

- Typically these ballads are narratives, presenting a loose plot line which details the scene of a murder.
- They can be narrated by either the victim or the criminal, or in some cases are recounted by the ghosts of the murdered.
- Parallel structure and repetition of the verses is common.