

Sick by Shel Silverstein

"I cannot go to school today,"
Said little Peggy Ann McKay.
"I have the measles and the mumps,
A gash, a rash and purple bumps.
My mouth is wet, my throat is dry,
I'm going blind in my right eye.
My tonsils are as big as rocks,
I've counted sixteen chicken pox
And there's one more--that's seventeen,
And don't you think my face looks green?
My leg is cut--my eyes are blue--
It might be instamatic flu.
I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,
I'm sure that my left leg is broke--
My hip hurts when I move my chin,
My belly button's caving in,
My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained,
My 'pendix pains each time it rains.
My nose is cold, my toes are numb.
I have a sliver in my thumb.
My neck is stiff, my voice is weak,
I hardly whisper when I speak.
My tongue is filling up my mouth,
I think my hair is falling out.
My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight,
My temperature is one-o-eight.
My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,
There is a hole inside my ear.
I have a hangnail, and my heart is--what?
What's that? What's that you say?
You say today is. . .Saturday?
G'bye, I'm going out to play!"

- In blue are other examples of hyperbole.

Kelly Gardner 9/19/10 4:38 PM

Comment: This is an AABB rhyme scheme Today/McKay... mumps/bumps

We see this repeated through the rest of the poem.

Kelly Gardner 9/19/10 4:53 PM

Comment: Here we see both a simile (a comparison using "like" or "as") and a **hyperbole**. (an extreme exaggeration).

The little girl is comparing her tonsils to rocks (simile), but she is also exaggerating quite a bit (hyperbole).

Kelly Gardner 9/19/10 4:47 PM

Comment: Here we see a metaphor. – a comparison to something that does not normally belong together.

She is comparing her illness to something that is "instamatic", which the flu is not. An "instamatic" is a type of automatic snapshot camera.

Kelly Gardner 9/20/10 3:52 PM

Comment: Here we see more repetition of the first word "My". He does this in many of the lines of this poem.

Kelly Gardner 9/19/10 5:05 PM

Comment: This is a change in the normal AABCC pattern or rhyme. The speaker changes and breaks the rhyme with "what", then rhymes the last three lines.

For a closer look at some poetic devices, look at the following chart:

Examples of poetic device	Description	Purpose	Name	Examples in other works
SICK	Writing the main idea of the poem at the top	Give the reader an idea of what the poem is about	Title	
"I cannot go to school today." Said little Peggy Ann McKay	Does not write lines to edge of page Writes each item or new phrase on new line Each line begins with capital letter, even if in the middle of a sentence. All lines begin in same left-hand margin. No indentations for new paragraphs.	Line length depends on rhythm pattern Indicates this is a poem	Verse	
"I cannot go to school today," Said little Péggy Ánn McKay..	Every other syllable in a line is stressed	Keeps a regular beat Makes the poem song-like, child's skipping song or nursery rhyme	Rhythm Iambic tetrameter	
...today ...McKay ...mumps ...bumps ...dry ...eye	The last word of each two lines sounds similar	Makes the poem sound like a song	Rhyme Rhyming couplets	
...my tonsils are as big as rocks	Comparing two things using 'like' or 'as'	Creating a vivid visual image; explaining a difficult or unfamiliar idea or object with something familiar	Imagery - simile	
...my tonsils are as big as rocks ...my belly button's caving in	Making an exaggerated statement for effect	Creates humour	Hyperbole	
It might be instamatic flu	Comparing two things (flu and camera that develops pictures instantly) without using 'like' or 'as'	Creating a vivid visual image; explaining a difficult or unfamiliar idea or object with something familiar	Imagery - metaphor	
...my mouth is wet ...my eyes are blue ...my elbow's bent	Includes 'normal' things in list of ailments as contrast to real illnesses 'measles', 'mumps', 'chicken pox'	Creates humour	Exaggeration, incongruity	
...a sliver in my thumb ...I have a hangnail	Includes 'minor' ailments with serious illnesses	Creates humour	Incongruity	
I have a hangnail, and my heart is – what?	Pattern of rhyming couplets broken Last 3 lines rhyme	Reinforces abrupt change in tone, change of direction in text Unexpected break creates humour	Rhyme Humour	
You say today is ...Saturday? G'bye, I'm going out to play!	After long list of ailments, speaker is suddenly well when day is revealed to be non-school day	Creates humour	Irony	

Chart – Courtesy of: By Jennifer Hind
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