



Skaldic Verse (Iceland, Norway)

The Vikings loved poetry! Try this simplified skaldic form: a poem of four lines divided into two half-lines with a pause between them. (A *caesura*.) There are two heavily *stressed* words in the first half and two in the second half. (Other words may be slightly stressed. But four sounds per line should stand out.) The first three heavily stressed words in each line are alliterated. (Have the same beginning sounds.) Like “children,” “chide,” and “chimney.” The last heavily stressed word in each line does not. “Swallows” in my second line. Got that? If you like this form, you might add a *kenning*. A *kenning* is a round-about way to describe something. For example, I might say “runner of waves” rather than “boat.” Here I’ve used “songsters of sorrows” as a *kenning* to stand in for adults with all their worries. It can be a lot of fun to hide some nouns in your poems via kennings.

EXAMPLE:

Lighten Up, Adults!

Oh songsters of sorrows, sojourning through the world,
the children chide you—like chimney swallows.
They knock and turn knobs. With the knowledge of freedom
their laughter is launched. It is the language of childhood.

by Shutta