

Henry the Fifth, Prologue by William Shakespeare

The plain script to work with. See the two other documents for this excerpt for markings of the 5-stress-4-beat pulse, word-rhythms and speech sounds, offered as suggestions by Kate Reese Hurd in light of her article, *Revealing the Music of Pentameter: Putting Shakespeare Through His Paces*, © September 2021.

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend

The brightest heaven of invention;

A Kingdom for a stage, Princes to act

And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!

Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,

Assume the port of Mars, and at his heels, [comportment]

Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire

Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,

The flat, unraisèd spirits that hath dared

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth

So great an object. Can this cockpit hold

The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram

Within this wooden O the very casques [helmets]

That did affright the air at Agincourt?

O, pardon! since a crooked figure may

Attest in little place a million; [e.g. M = mega]

And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,

On your imaginary forces work.

Suppose within the girdle of these walls

Are now confined two mighty monarchies,

Whose high-uprearèd and abutting fronts

The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder.

Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:

Into a thousand parts divide one man

And make imaginary puissance. [allowance]

Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i'th' receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
Turning th'accomplishment of many years
Into an hourglass – for the which supply,
Admit me Chorus to this history,
Who, Prologue-like, your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Exit.

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Markings of the 5-stress-4-beat pulse and word-rhythms are offered as suggestions by Kate Reese Hurd in light of her article, *Revealing the Music of Pentameter: Putting Shakespeare Through His Paces*, © September 2021. As in music, the finer nuances of expression cannot be notated.

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
1 2 3 + 4

The brightest heaven of invention;
1 2 + 3 4

A Kingdom for a stage, Princes to act
1 + 2 3 4

And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
1 + 2 + 3 4

Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
1 2 3 + 4

Assume the port of Mars, and at his heels, [comportment]
1 + 2 3 4

Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire
1 2 3 + 4

Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,
1 2 3 + 4

.....
The flat, unraised spirits that hath dared
1 (2) + 3 + 4

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
1 2 3 uh 4

So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
1 2 3 + 4

.....
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
1 + 2 3 4

.....
Within this wooden O the very casques [helmets]
1 + 2 3 4

That did affright the air at Agincourt?
1 + 2 + 3 4

O, pardon! since a crooked figure may [e.g. M = mega]
1 2 3 + 4

Attest in little place a million;
1 2 + 3 + 4

And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
1 2 + 3 4

On your imaginary forces work.
1 2 + 3 + 4

.....
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
1 (2) + 3 + 4

.....
Are now confined to two mighty monarchies,
1 2 3 + 4

.....
Whose high-upreared and a butting fronts
1 + (2) + 3 + 4

The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder.
1 2 3 + 4

.....
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:
1 2 + (3) + 4

.....
Into a thousand parts divide one man
1 2 + 3 4

.....
And make imaginary puissance. [allowance]
1 2 + 3 + 4

Think, when we talk of horses, | that you see them
1 2 + (3) + 4

Printing their proud hoofs |i'th' receiving earth;
1 2 3 + 4

For 'tis your x-thoughts that |now must deck our kings,
1 2 3 + 4

Carry them here and there, |jumping o'er times,
1 2 + 3 4

x-Turning th' accomplishment of |x-many x-years
1 2 + 3 4

x-In—to an hourglass — |x for the x which supply,
1 (uh) 2 3 + 4

Admit me Chorus to this |x history,
1 2 + 3 + 4

Who, Prologue-like, your |humble patience pray,
1 2 3 + 4

Gently to hear, |kindly to judge, our |play. Exit.
1 2 3 4 | 1

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Markings of the sounds (for shaping, as repetitions, as reminders), word-rhythms and 5-stress-4-beat pulse are suggestions by Kate Reese Hurd in light of her article, *Revealing the Music of Pentameter: Putting Shakespeare Through His Paces*,[©] September 2021. As in music, the finer nuances of expression cannot be notated.

Ō ˇfor ˇa^{x-} M^{iu}use of | fire, that wōuld ascēnd
1 2 3 + 4

The brīghtèst hēaven of in | vention;
1 2 + 3 4

A Kīngdom for a stage, | P^jrīnces to act
1 + 2 3 4

And mōn^varchs^{x-} to behold the^{xv} swelling | scene!
1 + 2 + 3 4

Then shōuld the wârlike | Harry, like himself,
1 2 3 + 4

Assume the port of M^vars, ˇand | at his hēels, [comportment]
1 + 2 3 4

Lēashed in like hōunds, ˇshōuld | famine, sword, and fire
1 2 3 + 4

^{x-}Crouch for employment. But | pardon, gēntles all,
1 2 3 + 4

.....
The^{x-} flät, unráised | spirits thät häth dāred
1 (2) + 3 + 4

Ōn this unwōrthy | scāffōld ˇto bring fōrth
1 2 3 uh 4

Sō^{x-} gréat ˇän öbject. | Cān this cōckpit hōld
1 2 3 + 4

The vāsty^{x-} fields of Frānce? | Or máy we crām
1 + 2 3 4

Wīthīn this wōōden^{x-} Ō the |^{xv} véry cāsques [helmets]
1 + 2 3 4

Thät dīd affrīght | thē áir ät Ägīn | cōurt?
1 + 2 + 3 4

Ō, pārdon!^{x-} sīnce a | crōōked fīgure máy [e.g. M = mega]
1 2 3 + 4

Ättèst in līttle pláce ä | mīllī on;
1 2 + 3 + 4

And lèt us, | cīphers to this |^{x-} gréat accōmpt,
1 2 + 3 4

Ōn yōur īmagīnary | fōrces wōrk.
1 2 + 3 + 4

.....
Suppōse wīthīn the | gīrdle of thēse walls
1 (2) + 3 + 4

Are^{x-} nōw confīned | |two ˇmīghty mōn^varchīes,
1 2 3 + 4

Whose hīgh-ūpreārèd and ä |butting frōnts
1 + (2) + 3 + 4

The^{x-} perīlōus narrōw |ōcēan ˇpārts^{xv} āsūndēr.
1 2 3 + 4

.....
Piece öut öur īmpērfēctīōns | |wī|th| yōur |th|ōughts:
1 2 + (3) + 4

^xĪnto a |th|ōusand pārts ˇdī |vide one mǎn
1 2 + 3 4

And^{x-} make īmagīnary | pū īs sance. [allowance]
1 2 + 3 + 4

.....
|Th|ĩnk |wh|èn wē talk of horses, | | [˘]that [˘]you sēē thēm
1 2 + (3) + 4

Prĩntĩng *their* prōud hōō|fs| |ĩ *th'* re|cēiving ēar|th|;
1 2 3 + 4

Fōr ('tīs yōur ^{x-}|th|ōughts) [˘]that |nōw must dèck ōur kīngs,
1 2 3 + 4

Cárry [˘]thēm hēre and *thére*, |jumping o'er times,
1 2 + 3 4

^{x-}Tũrning *th'* accomplishment of |^{x-}man̄y ^{x-}yēars
1 2 + 3 4

.....
^{x-}ĩn—^utō [˘]an hōūrglass — |^{x-}for *the* ^{x-}|wh|ĩch supply,
1 (uh) 2 3 + 4

Admĩt mē Chōrus tō *thĩs* |^{x-˘x}hĩstōr̄y,
1 2 + 3 + 4 ~

^uWhō, Prōlogue-lĩke, yōur |humble pátĩence práy,
1 2 3 + 4

^jGèntly tō hēar, |^ũkĩndly tō ^jjudge, ōur |pláy. *Exit.*
1 2 3 4 | 1