Henry the Fifth, Prologue  by William Shakespeare

The plain script to work with. See the two other documents for this excerpt for markups 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,
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.

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

That did affright the air at Agin court?
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.

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

Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
1 2 3 4

Whose high-upreared and 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

Printing their proud hoofs through the receiving earth;

For 'twas your thoughts now must deck our kings,

Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,

Turning th'accomplishment of many years

In to 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 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.

Within thís wóoden Ý–Ô the | Ý–Ô very cáques [helmets]
1 + 2 3 4

Thát did affright | thé áir át Ágin|cõurt?
1 + 2 3 4

Ō, párdon! Ý–Ô since a | croöked figure máy [e.g. M = mega]
1 2 3 4

Áttèst | in líttle pláce á | million;
1 2 3 4

And lét us, çiphers to thís | Ý–Ô gréát | accômp, thís
1 2 3 4

On your imaginary | forces wórk.

Suppose | wiðin the | girdle of these wálls
1 2 3 4

Are Ý–Ô now confíned | | two | mighty | mónáhíes, [compartmen]t
1 2 3 4

Whose | high-upréărèd | and a | butting fronts
1 2 3 4

The perilous narrow | ócéán | pârts | Ý–Ô asünånder.
1 2 3 4

Piece out our imperfections | with your thoughts:
1 2 3 4

Into a | thóssand párts | dá|vide one máñ
1 2 3 4

And Ý–Ô make imaginary puïsance. [allowance]
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them

Printing their proud hoofs; 'th' receiving ear[th];

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

Turning th' accomplishment of which supply,

Admit me Chorus to this history,

Who, Prologue-like, your humble patience pray.

Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play. Exit.