Images > Abstractions



Sight

Sound

Smell

Taste

Touch

Abstract (Avoid):	*I felt sad.*
Concrete (Embrace):	Let the physical image of the abandoned coat and the rain carry the emotional weight. *Poems think in images, not in abstractions.*

Indirect Meditation: **Keats's *To Autumn*** (1819)

¶ 3.2



Textual Images
(The Surface)

- Maturing sun
- Swelling gourds
- Lingering bees thinking warm days will never cease

Hidden Ideas
(The Meditation)

Ripeness fading into Abundance & Mortality

Key Insight: The poem never states an idea about 'time' directly—the image IS the argument.

The Imagist Manifesto (Early 20th Century)

Key Figures: Ezra Pound, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Amy Lowell

Pound's 3 Rules (1913 Checklist):

- ☑ **Direct treatment** of the "thing."
- ☑ **Zero unnecessary words** (no word that does not contribute).
- ☑ **Rhythm** based on a **musical phrase** (not a metronome).

Application: Ezra Pound's *In a Station of the Metro*

Comparing faces in a crowd to petals on a wet bough.



Figurative Language: Simile vs. Metaphor

¶ 3.4

Simile - Explicit

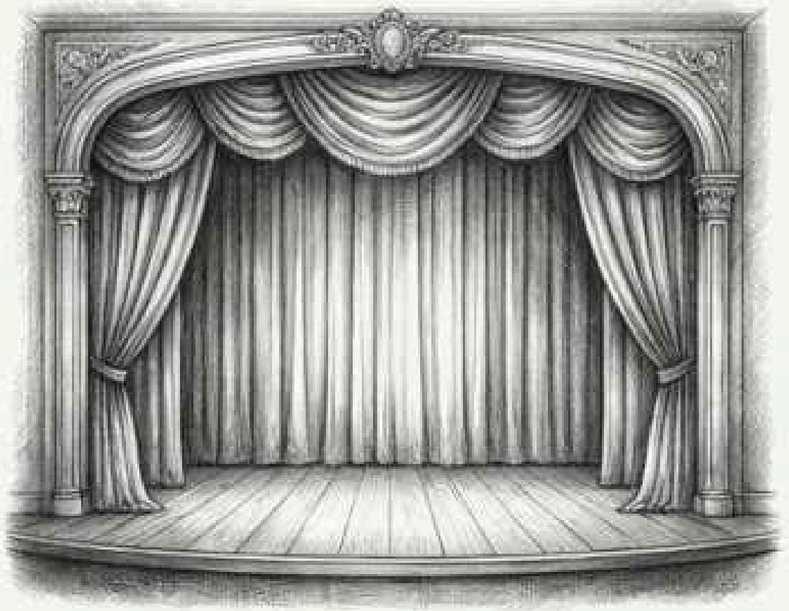
A [is like / as] B



Example:
"*My love is like a red, red rose*" (Robert Burns, 1794)

Metaphor - Direct

A [is] B



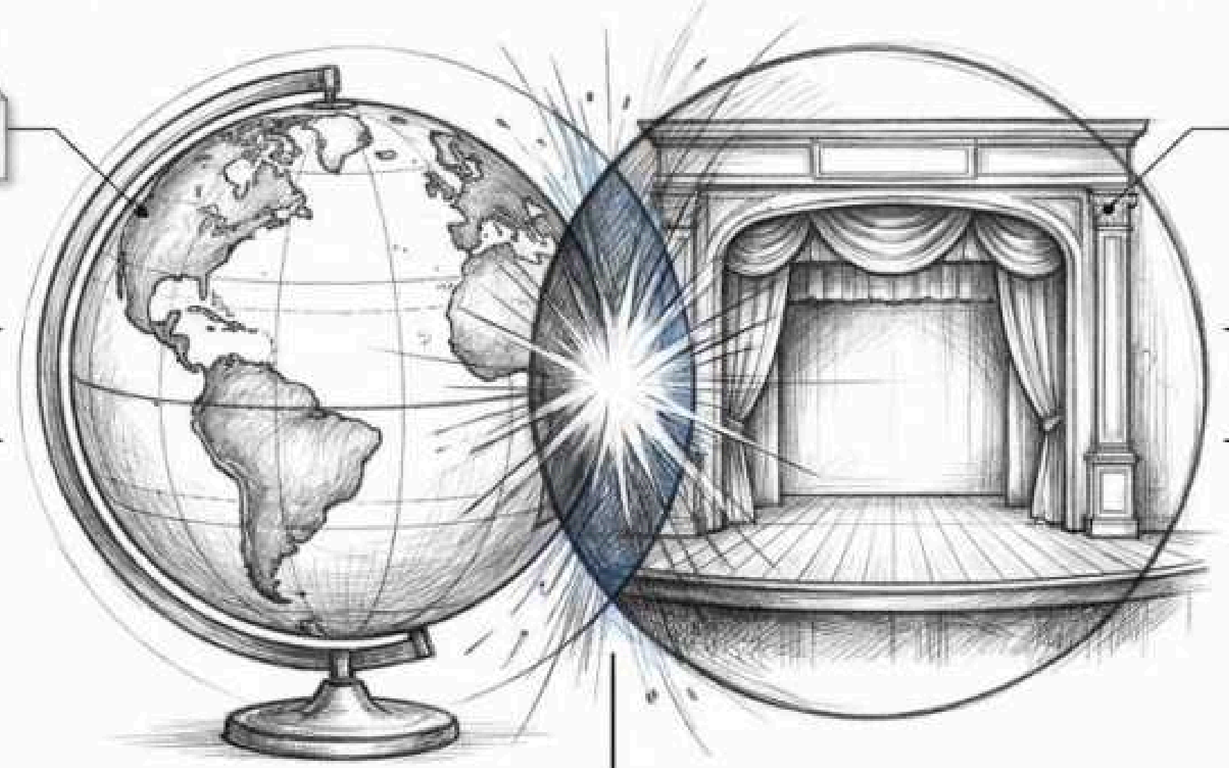
Example:
"*All the world's a stage*" (Shakespeare)

Analytical Insight

Removing the words "like" or "as" forces a bolder, absolute claim. It says one thing IN TERMS OF another.

The Anatomy of a Metaphor

Tenor + Vehicle = Metaphor



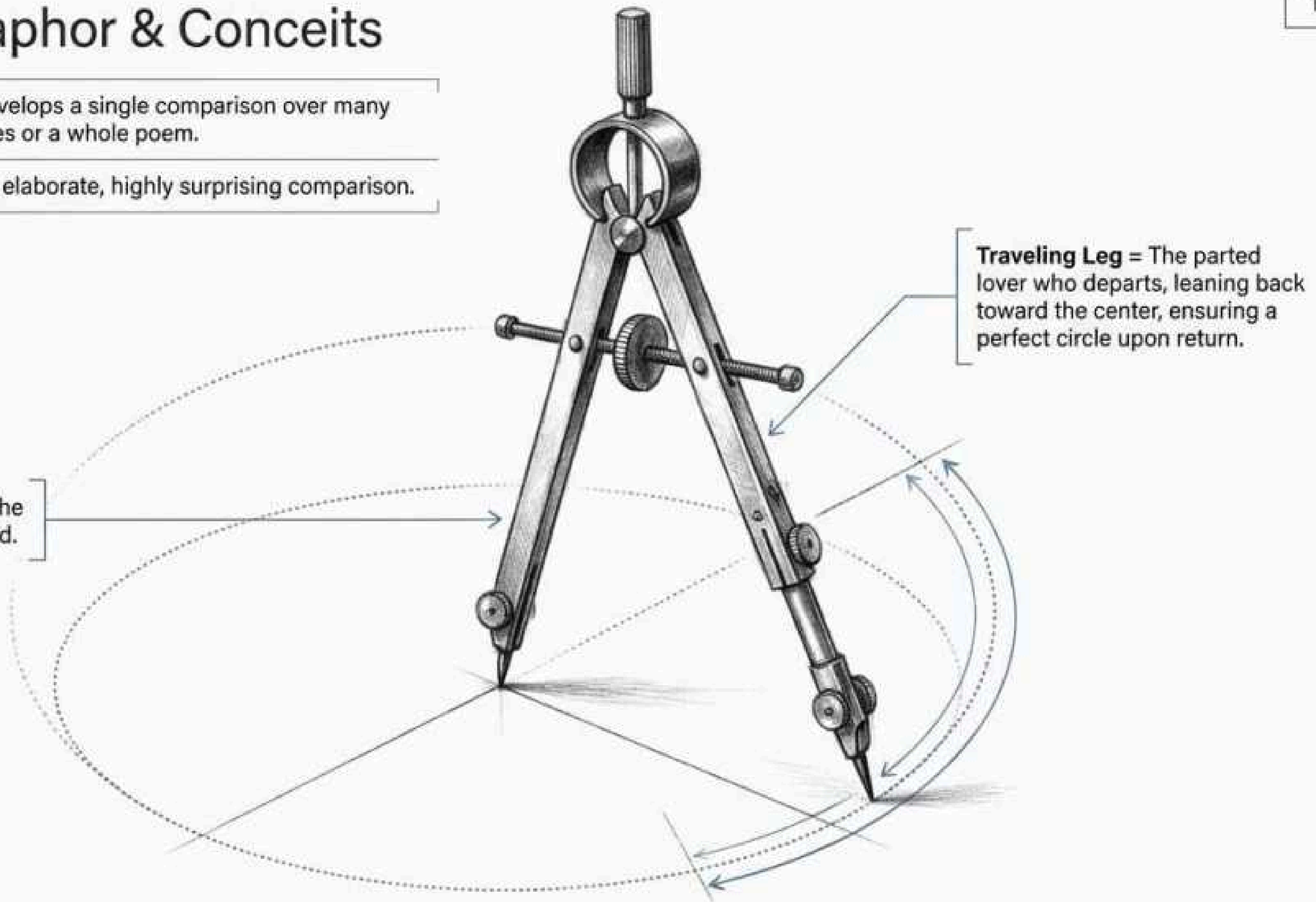
Tenor:
The literal subject being described.

Vehicle:
The image used to describe the subject.

The conceptual power lies entirely in the unexpected connections generated in the overlap between these two distinct elements.

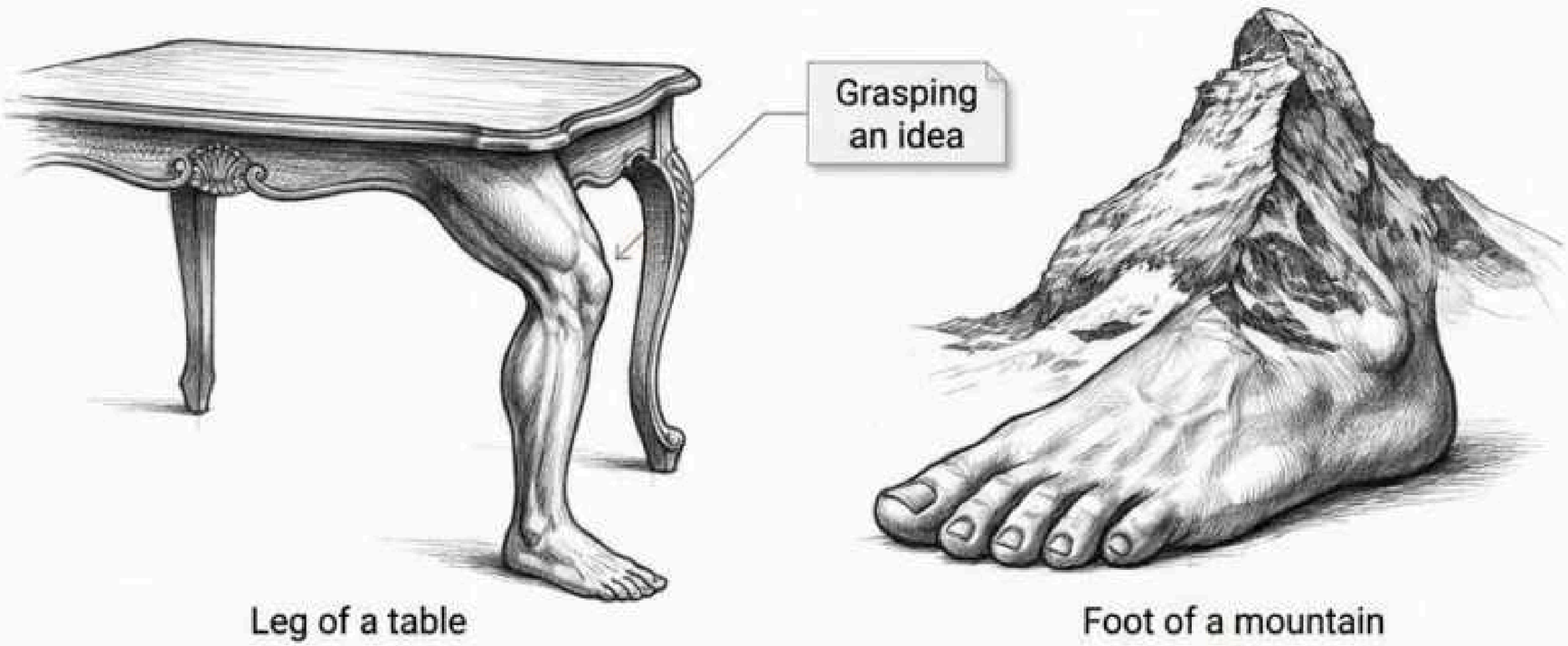
Extended Metaphor & Conceits

1	**Extended Metaphor:**	Develops a single comparison over many lines or a whole poem.
2	**Conceit:**	An elaborate, highly surprising comparison.



The Danger of Dead Metaphors

Fresh & Shocking → Familiar → Dead (Unnoticed)



The Threat (George Orwell):
"Stale, ready-made phrases result in lazy writing and lazy thinking."

The Poet's Job:
"To revive language by inventing fresh metaphors or waking up the dead ones."

Animating the World: Personification & Apostrophe

Device 1: Personification



Function: Gives human qualities to things or ideas.

Example: John Donne's "Death, be not proud", addressing Death as a boastful person who will ultimately die.

Device 2: Apostrophe



Function: Directly addressing someone absent or something non-human.

Examples: Keats speaking to the nightingale; Shelley speaking to the west wind.

Shared Effect: Both devices make the world feel alive, responsive, and animate.

Compression Devices: Metonymy vs. Synecdoche

Compression by Association (Not Resemblance)



Metonymy (Close Association)

Item A —[stands next to]→ Concept B

Examples: The Crown (Monarchy), The Pen (Writing), Washington (US Government)



Synecdoche (Part for Whole)

Item A —[is a physical part of]→ Concept B

Examples: "All hands on deck" (Sailors), "Wheels" (Car)

The Symbol

Symbol = Literal Reality + Implied Meaning

Literal Reality:
An invisible worm destroying a real flower.



Implied Meaning:
Corrupted love, disease, or hidden sin.

Definition & Crucial Distinction: An image that stands for something beyond itself while remaining itself.
"Unlike a metaphor, a symbol leaves its second meaning entirely unspoken and implied."

Categories of Symbols & Allegory

Allegory
(Apex - Narrative Scale)

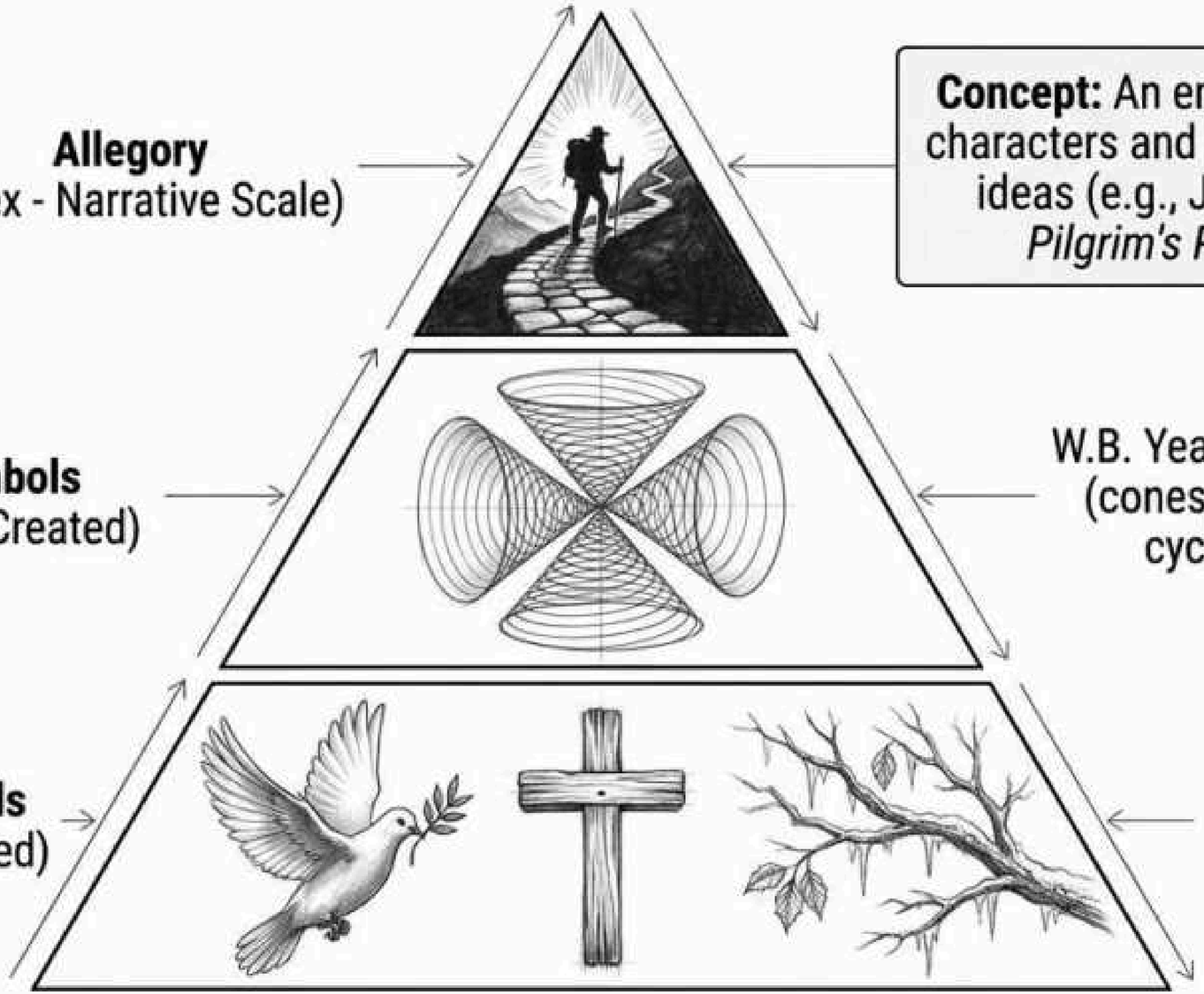
Concept: An entire narrative where characters and events map 1:1 onto ideas (e.g., John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 1678).

Private Symbols
(Middle - Poet Created)

W.B. Yeats's spinning gyres (cones representing the cycles of history).

Conventional Symbols
(Base - Culturally Shared)

A dove (Peace), A cross (Christianity), Winter (Old age).



Irony: The Gap

Irony = △ (Expectation – Reality)

Mechanisms of Irony:

- **Verbal**: Saying the exact opposite of what is meant.
- **Situational**: An outcome entirely contrary to expectation.

Case Study: Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ozymandias* (1818)

Expectation (The Inscription): *"Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair."*

↕

Reality (The Landscape): Nothing remains around the remains around the shattered statue but endless, empty sand.



Paradox & Oxymoron

Paradox (Conceptual Contradiction)

An apparent contradiction that reveals a deeper truth, jolting readers into fresh thinking.

{ [Death is permanent] + [Resurrection defeats death] }

⇓

= *"Death, thou shalt die."* (John Donne)

Oxymoron (Linguistic Compression)

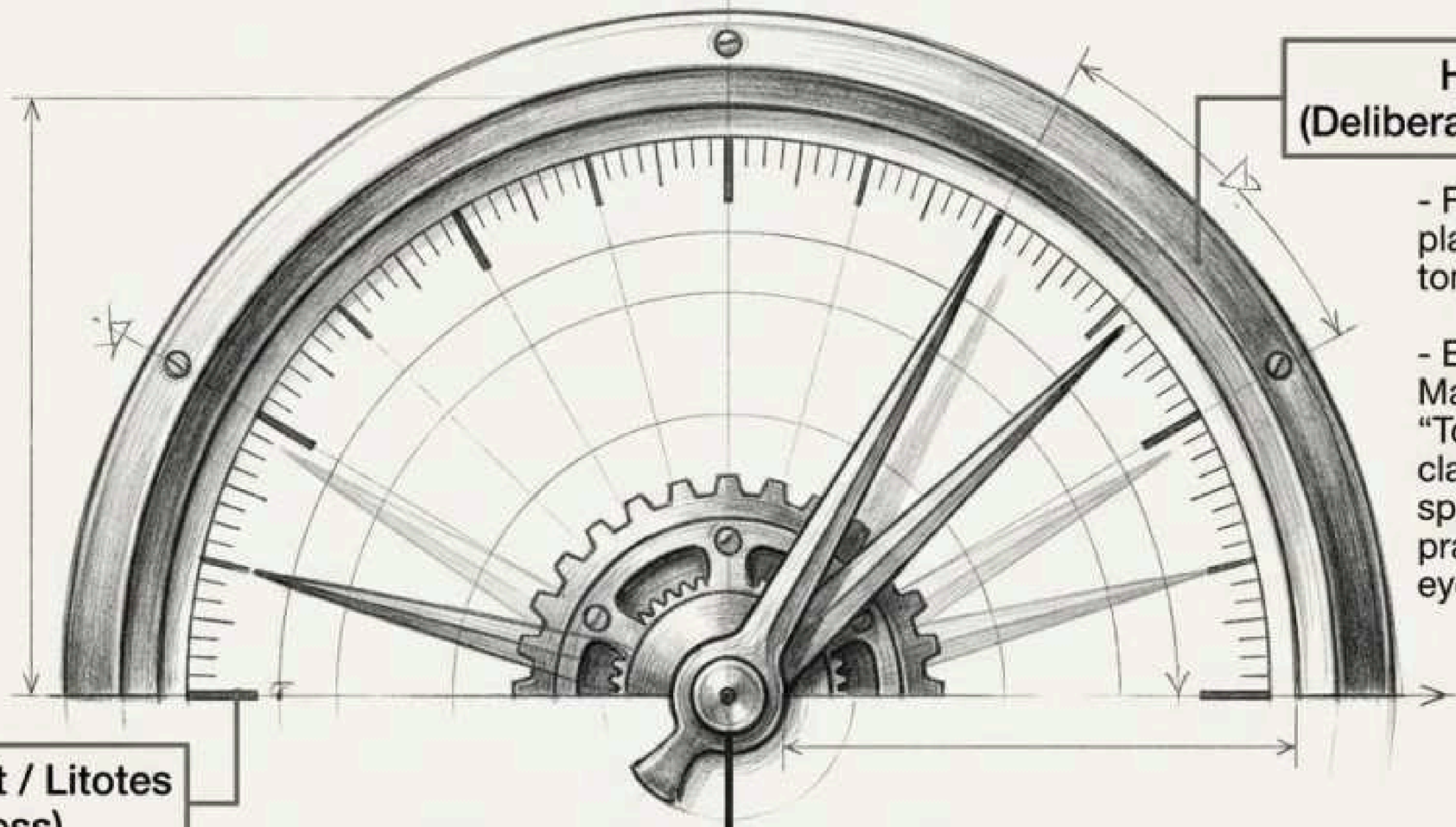
A paradox compressed into exactly two words.

[Sweet] + [Sorrow] = Truth

[Living] + [Death] = Truth

Shaping Tone: Hyperbole & Understatement

¶ 3.14



Hyperbole (Deliberate Exaggeration)

- Function: Creates a playful or passionate tone.

- Example: Andrew Marvell's speaker in "To His Coy Mistress" claiming he would spend a hundred years praising his beloved's eyes.

Understatement / Litotes (Saying Less)

- Function: Creates a wry, stoic, or tragic tone by stating less than is meant.

Core Purpose: Both devices are primarily used to shape the TONE and emotional register of the poem.

Application Exercise: Show, Don't Explain

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The Protocol:

Step 1: Choose an emotion.



Step 2: Write a short poem using ONLY concrete images. Never name the feeling itself.



Step 3: Introduce exactly one metaphor that surprises you.



Step 4 (Test): Read the poem aloud. Would a listener successfully guess the feeling?



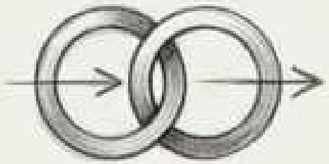
Step 5 (Edit): Ruthlessly cut any line that explains rather than shows.



Lecture Synthesis: The Figurative Toolkit

¶ 3.16

Synthesis Matrix

Foundation		Poems think in senses/images (Keats, Imagists).
Comparisons		Simile & Metaphor (Tenor/Vehicle), Conceits, Reviving Dead Metaphors.
Perspectives		Personification, Apostrophe, Metonymy, Synecdoche (Shaping how we see).
Depth & Tone		Symbols, Allegory, Irony, Paradox, Hyperbole (Adding depth).

Looking Ahead → Next Lecture: Poetic Forms