**How to Annotate a Poem**

We annotate texts and poems in order to understand them. An annotation requires many readings of the poem. You must make time to seriously consider each word and its place within the poem as a whole. What is the author saying through this particular speaker/persona? What is the natural progression of the poem? What is its purpose? What is the tone and style of the poem? Seriously consideration of the following elements:

* Structure of the poem which explains its progression along with the major turning points
* Language that denotes regionality, education of speaker, rhetorical purpose, etc. Is it conversational, colloquial or does the speaker fall back on formal language?
* Tone: Is the poem celebratory, depressed, confused? Does it shift or change?
* Speaker/Persona: What does the poem reveal about the speaker?
* Imagery: What images does the poem use to create meaning or set the mood?
* Symbolism: What images become symbolic?
* Any other characteristics that are specific to your poem--Every poem is different.

As you research, you will discover that particular poets are known for certain techniques or styles. If this poem follows that trend or veers from it is important to your understanding of the poem.

Example of an annotated poem:

