

Seadna Poems

The seadna is an Irish poetic form, which means there are quite a few rules about rhyming and syllables. But it's fun once you get the rules down.

Here are the guidelines:

Quatrain (or four-line) stanzas

Eight syllables in lines one and three; seven syllables in lines two and four

Lines one and three end with a 2-syllable word; lines two and four end with a one-syllable word

Lines two and four end rhyme with each other

The final word of the first line alliterates with the first stressed word of the second line

The third line rhymes with the stressed word preceding the last word of the stanza...

...and all three of those words alliterate with each other

I know, I know; it is a lot to track in a four-liner, right?

Séadna (shay'-na) is Gaelic for passage. The Séadnas are [dan díreach](#) or direct meter requiring alliteration in each line. The Séadna alternate syllable count from line to line. They are written with cywddydd (harmony of sound) and dunadh (ending the poem with the same word, phrase or line with which the poem began). Séadna (named for its main character) is also an old Irish folktale by *Peadar Ó Laoghaire* (1839-1920), published in 1904 which is a favorite for beginning readers of Gaelic and is not written in verse.

- The elements of the **Séadna** are:
 1. written in any number of quatrains.
 2. syllabic 8-7-8-7.
 3. written with L1 and L3, 2 syllable end words; L2 and L4, 1 syllable end words.
 4. rhymed. L2 and L4 end rhyme, L3 rhymes with the stressed word preceding the final word of L4. There are two aicill-rhymes in the second couplet.
 5. composed with alliteration in each line, the final word of L4 alliterating with the preceding stressed word. The final syllable of L1 alliterates with the first stressed word of L2.

x x x x x (x a)

x a x x x b

x x x b x x (x c)

x b x c x x b

With apologies to Sunset Magazine by *Barbara Hartman*

Pool parties in backyard retreats,
trellised vineyards veined with brooks.
Arizona desert designs
cool kitchens for combined cooks.

Chinese chicken salad curry
— rad recipes make me drool —
Tiki Mai Tais and braised pheasant,
seared salmon by pleasant pool.