Poetry: The Double Dactyl

The *higgledy-piggledy*, or 'Double Dactyl,' is a fixed form of double dactyls.

- The first line is "*Higgledy-piggledy*" or other rhyming nonsense.
- The second is a name.
- The fourth and eighth lines rhyme and consist of one dactyl followed by one stressed syllable. All other lines are double dactyls.
- One line must be a single six-syllable, double dactylic word.

The metrical pattern:

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/ — — / — —
/ — — / — —
/ — — /
/ — — / — —
/ — — / — —
/ — — / — —
/ — — /

Some examples:

Room with a View

Higgledy-piggledy
Emily Dickinson
Looked out her front window
Struggling for breath,
Suffering slightly from
Agoraphobia:
"Think I'll just stay in and
Write about Death."

Romeo

Higgledy Piggledy
Romeo Montague
Thought his love dead and so
Poisoned himself
Juliet, hasty but
Eschatological,
Died lest she leave him a-
Lone on the shelf.

Double-Dactyl

Higgledy-Piggledy
Dactyls in dimeter,
Verse form with choriambs
(Masculine rhyme):
One sentence (two stanzas)
Hexasyllabically
Challenges poets who
Don't have the time.

Titus

Higgledy-Piggledy
Titus Andronicus
Baking a dish forTa-
mora the Queen
Anthropophagically
Speaking a triumph, a
Three-star addition to
Nouvelle cuisine.

—Louisa Newlin