

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

→ complex system made stupid
degrades form like the word degrades quotes show language also commercialized appropriation (owned) by Facebook

highly structured form → used for love or mocking → ending every line w/ like

Sestina: Like A. E. Stallings

With a nod to Jonah Winter

"Sestina: Bob" which used the same technique

friendship degraded and redefined

Now we're all "friends," there is no love but Like,

A semi-demi goddess, something like

A reality-TV star look-alike,

Named Simile or Me Two. So we like

In order to be liked. It isn't like
There's Love or Hate now. Even plain "dislike"

Is frowned on: there's no button for it. Like

Is something you can quantify: each "like"

You gather's almost something money-like,

Token of virtual support. "Please like

This page to stamp out hunger." And you'd like
To end hunger and climate change alike,

But it's unlikely Like does diddly. Like

Just twiddles its unopposing thumbs-ups, like

Wise props up scarecrow silences. "I'm like,
So OVER him," I overhear. "But, like,

He doesn't get it. Like, you know? He's like
It's all OK. Like I don't even LIKE

Him anymore. Whatever. I'm all like ..."
Take "like" out of our chat, we'd all alike

Flounder, agape, gesticulating like
A foreign film sans subtitles, fall like

Dumb phones to mooted desuetude. Unlike
With other crutches, um, when we use "like,"

We're not just buying time on credit: Like
Displaces other words; crowds, cuckoo-like,

Endangered hatchlings from the nest. (Click "like"
If you're against extinction!) Like is like
Invasive zebra mussels, or it's like
Those nutria-things, or kudzu, or belike

Redundant fast food franchises, each like
(More like) the next. Those poets who dislike
Inversions, archaisms, who just like
Plain English as she's spoke — why isn't "like"
Their (literally) every other word? I'd like
Us just to admit that's what real speech is like

But as you like, my friend. Yes, we're alike,
How we pronounce, say, lichen, and dislike
Cancer and war. So like this page. Click Like.

2-n.

5-adj.

6-v.

introduction of 1st person → both accusation and admission

of guilt ("my")

last stanza shows how unlike each other various versions of "like" can be

sound, not meaning, important

lack of subject in last two directives

↳ internet = loss of identity/actor (due to thoughtless action)

rhyme/sing-song tone
mocking childish culture

basic mobile phone
"smart" phone actually regression

probable allusion to hilariously bad English phrase book/conversation guide

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personification of "Like" → erosion of what it means to be a person

"like" degrades identity, figurative (poetic) language, & grammar
compounds further proof of language degradation

colons used for explanation → attempt to quantify
"like" as a noun → attempt to turn simile to metaphor
↳ "stronger," but less accurate/real

concrete and abstract terms juxtaposed → lines of reality blurred

↳ belief in importance of desires/dreams separated from (in)action

seems to be a pun off "opposable thumbs" which traditionally define humanity, now "Like" defines humanity

alliteration creates empty repetitive sound (like "liking" a cause)

stanza break separates "LIKE" (emotion) and "him" (human)
↳ meaningless language isolates people from feeling

switch from "you" to "we" → poet included in failure
↳ tone (slightly) less patronizing

ironic diction meaning "state of disuse" about a word fallen into disuse
↳ mocks dependence on simplistic language by elevating diction (& creating described effect)

↳ meaningful language/poetry still has the power to elicit emotion

parenthetical = afterthought (just like cause)

archaic word choice = victim of "like"
↳ invasive species destroying nature → language similarly self-destructive

only group Stallings actually distances herself from is other poets

expressions are grammatically unnecessary → "like" & "more like" gratuitous
↳ by using "like" v. "what real speech is," poet also not in reality