Homework 4 – Syntactic constituency

Due Friday, March 9

1. Constituency tests

1.1. Use the pronoun test to determine whether the underlined groups of words in the following sentences are noun phrases.

a. Sheila met the goat who ate her sock.
   Resulting sentence: ____________________________________________
   Noun phrase? _________
   Why/why not?

b. The shoe we tried on yesterday was much too big.
   Resulting sentence: ____________________________________________
   Noun phrase? _________
   Why/why not?

1.2. Use the do-form test to determine whether the underlined groups of words in the following sentences are verb phrases.

a. Chris runs in marathons every weekend.
   Resulting sentence: ____________________________________________
   Verb phrase? _________
   Why/why not?
b. Michael e-mailed me a picture of baby porcupines.

Resulting sentence: __________________________________________

Verb phrase? _________

Why/why not?

2. **Phrase breaks in songs**

In songs and poetry, sentences are often too long to fit in a single line, and so the poet/songwriter needs to put line breaks in the middle of sentences. Your task is to figure out the phrase structure of the lyrics given, and tell me where these artists are putting line breaks with respect to phrases.

Some of the lyrics have some crossed out words at their edges – ignore these.

In each of the three lyrics below, do the following three things:

1. Label each word with its part of speech. (some are done for you)

   **IMPORTANT:** Ignore all of the crossed out words.
   
   “//” represents the line break.

2. Find every phrase – that is, every NP, every VP, and every PP – in the lyrics given. Show me all of these phrases any way that works for you – brackets, a tree drawing, a list, whatever – but make sure that you find every single phrase.

3. Explain where the line break (“//”, remember) is with respect to phrases. Is it exactly between a pair of phrases? Is it inside one or more phrases? Say something about each phrase that either contains or is right next to the line break.

**Example**  The speed of sound, Coldplay

- **NPs:** “the inventors”, “the buildings that you put up”, “you”
- **VPs:** “design the buildings that you put up”, “put up”
- **PPs:** “up”

```
the inventors could never design // the buildings that you put up
```

Where is the line break?  *Inside the VP “design the buildings that you put up”*, *between the verb “design” and the NP “the buildings...”*. 
Building a mystery, Sarah McLachlan

You live in a church // where you sleep with voodoo dolls.

Where is the line break?

Walk this way, Aerosmith

I took a big chance at the high-school dance // with a missy who was ready to play.

Where is the line break?

Love and some verses, Iron and Wine

Love is a dress that you made // long to hide your knees.

Where is the line break?