Definitions for Figures of Speech and Sound Devices

Alliteration - repetition of consonant sounds in consecutive neighboring words to enhance the sound in a poem.
Example: “Wooing wind”

Allusion - references to familiar historical or literary persons or events that readers are expected to recognize and which enrich a work by introducing associations from another context.
Example: “Mariana in the moated grange” [Measure for Measure]

Assonance - the repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds, especially in stressed syllables.
Example: “crusted” / “rusted”

Imagery - words and phrases that describe what is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched which when repeated in a pattern can help to convey a particular impression about a character or situation.
Example: Crusted flower pots, rusted nails, broken sheds

Metaphor - a figure of speech containing a comparison of two things on the basis of a shared quality as if one thing were the other.
Example: Not used in the poem.

Onomatopoeia - when the sound of a word echoes its meaning.
Examples: “creaked” / “shrieked”

Personification - endowing inanimate objects or abstract ideas with life or human characteristics.
Example: “gray-eyed morn,” “dreamy house”

Refrain - a phrase or verse that is repeated at intervals in a song or poem.
Example: She said, “My life is dreary,
He cometh not,” she said
She said, “I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead.”

Simile - a figure of speech stating a comparison using like or as.
Example: Not present in the poem

Symbol - a person, object, action, place or event that, in addition to its literal meaning, suggests a more complex meaning or range of meaning.
Example: poplar tree

Synecdoche - the substitution of a part of the whole.
Example: “old footsteps trod the upper floors.”