

Poetry Writing Workshop: The Poet's Process

Instructor: Anna Maria Hong

Time: 2:00–4:00 p.m., Saturdays, April 15–May 20, 2017

Place: Rosenbach Museum & Library

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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to poetry writing, drawing upon the Rosenbach's unique collection of writers' manuscripts to inspire the creation of new poems. Alongside viewings of such manuscripts as John Keats' and Marianne Moore's poems in various stages of editing and revision, we will engage in discussions and writing experiments designed to spark original thinking, develop facility with writing, and enhance understanding of your creative process. By the end of the course, you will have created a portfolio of poems and expanded your knowledge of diverse approaches to poetry writing.

Goals

This course is designed for beginning and intermediate writers who want to expand their approach to the writing of poetry. My ultimate goal for each of you is the creation of new poems, and the emphasis is on your writing, but other goals include:

- expanding your repertoire of "poetic tools" to use in writing both in traditional forms and free verse
- engaging in dialogue with your fellow students and myself about your poems
- learning how to revise your poems

General Procedures

We will begin each class with viewings of the writers' manuscripts, books, and/or memorabilia. The Rosenbach's Librarian, Elizabeth Fuller, and the museum's Manager of Public Programs, Edward Pettit, will lead most of the viewings. Following these viewings, we will draft poems and share poems-in-progress, providing constructive feedback on each other's writing.

Texts

Original manuscripts and books are drawn from the Rosenbach's archives and will be viewed in the library. I will also ask you to read full poems and modernized texts ahead of time; see "Homework" below.

Schedule

The following schedule outlines the topics we will cover each week. I will announce any changes to the schedule in class and via email.

April 15th Text & Image

Viewing: William Blake's *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise* and pages from *The Daughters of Albion*

Writing: The Four Elements & Fantastical Poems

Homework: Read the Guidelines for Giving and Receiving Feedback (emailed document)

Read John Keats' *Lamia*: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2490/2490-h/2490-h.htm> and Lord Byron's "Prometheus": <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/43843> and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud": <https://wordsworth.org.uk/poetry/historical-poetry/daffodils.html>

April 22nd Romantics & Rhyme

Viewing: First draft of the last 12 lines of *Lamia* and manuscript and printed copy of the opening to "Prometheus" and William Wordsworth's draft of "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

Writing: Gods and Monsters & Collaborative Sonnets

Homework: Read "The Cook's Tale" and "The Man of Law" from Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*: <https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/ckt-par.htm#PROLOGUE> and

<https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/mlt-par.htm>

April 29th Illustrations & Emendations

Viewing: Illustrated manuscripts of Chaucer's "The Cook's Tale" and "The Man of Law" and Lewis Carroll's "Phantasmagoria" from *Rhyme and Reason* and Carroll's correspondence with A.B. Frost regarding the illustrations

Writing: Persona Poems & Parables

Homework: Read Robert Burns' "For All That":
<http://www.robertburns.org/works/496.shtml> and Chaucer's "The Turnament of Tottenham" from Bishop Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45940/45940-h/45940-h.htm> and a modernized translation:
<http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/canttales/sirthop/totten.html>

May 6th Ballads

Viewing: Manuscript and broadside of Robert Burns' "For All That" and poems from Bishop Thomas Percy's edited *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*: "The Turnament of Tottenham" and page 33 of volume III on King Arthur's death

In-Class

Reading: Ballads Old & New

Writing: Ballads Bold & Bawdy

Homework: Read Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*:
<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0608221h.html>

May 13th Dramatic Verse, Voice & Audience

Viewing: Manuscript and annotated typed versions of *Under Milk Wood*

Writing: Poem for Multiple Voices & Revising for Audience

Homework: Read Marianne Moore's "Granite and Steel":
<http://wordsworth2.net/literary/granitesteel.htm> and "The Arctic Ox,"
"The Buffalo," and "The Fish" (handouts)

May 20th Research & Radical Revision

Viewing: Revised versions of “Granite and Steel” and “The Arctic Ox,” Moore’s index notes in Alan Trachtenberg’s *Brooklyn Bridge*, Moore’s animal folder on the ox and memorabilia, and the Moore room

Writing: Radical Revision & Animal Tales

Live Readings, Merriment & Final Words