

Modernists & Movement: Yoga in the Garden

Modernist poetry and yoga may seem at first glance like very different disciplines; look closer and you'll see they have much in common. Both are most productive when approached by warming up—be it physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually—and finding flow and rhythm is key to each experience. The exploration and experimentation of a modernist poem or yoga practice help guide you to a deeper understanding of the self and the world, and how each are intimately intertwined. To get there, poetry and yoga both require mindful reflection and attention to the precise alignment of words/bodies.

Come explore this intersection of body, mind and spirit as we practice gentle yoga illuminated through the poetry of T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, Marianne Moore and other modernists from The Rosenbach's collection. Weather permitting, we'll meet in the garden. Each 75-minute session is suitable for all levels (no prior yoga or poetry experience is required!); please bring your mat and any props you wish to use.

About the Instructor

Liza Seltzer is a Rosenbach Board Member and RYT500 with certifications in Vinyasa, Kripalu, Yin, Chair and Restorative Yoga.

FAQs

I'm curious about the class but haven't done yoga before. Is that ok?

Yes—this class will be accessible for everyone. The poses will be offered with plenty of cues and options for adapting.

What happens if it rains or is too cold to comfortably to hold the class outside?

We'll simply move inside—there is a room reserved for us for this purpose, to avoid the need to reschedule.

What should I wear, and what do I need to bring to class?

Please wear clothes you can comfortably move in. If you don't have yoga pants, sweatpants, footless tights or shorts are fine. It's a good idea to wear layers, so that you can add or subtract as needed as you warm up and cool down during your practice. Please bring a yoga mat if you have one, and if you have blocks, a strap and/or a beach towel (or yoga blanket) those props will come in handy. The instructor will have some extra mats and props available, so you can borrow rather than buy if you prefer. Last but not least, it's a good idea to bring some water with you.

Do I need to do anything else to prepare for class?

Yes—we will need to collect a signed waiver from you. The waiver is found on the last page of this syllabus; you can print and sign it and bring it to your first class, or we will have blank forms at the first class that you can sign when you arrive.

Anything else?

You may wish to read the poems in advance, but this is not required! We'll be reading and meditating on them as part of each class.

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Week 1: April 28

The Fish

by Marianne Moore

wade
through black jade.
Of the crow-blue mussel-shells, one keeps
adjusting the ash-heaps;
opening and shutting itself like

an
injured fan.
The barnacles which encrust the side
of the wave, cannot hide
there for the submerged shafts of the

sun,
split like spun
glass, move themselves with spotlight swiftness
into the crevices—
in and out, illuminating

the
turquoise sea
of bodies. The water drives a wedge
of iron through the iron edge
of the cliff; whereupon the stars,

pink
rice-grains, ink-
bespattered jelly fish, crabs like green
lilies, and submarine
toadstools, slide each on the other.

All
external
marks of abuse are present on this
defiant edifice—
all the physical features of

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ac-
cident—lack
of cornice, dynamite grooves, burns, and
hatchet strokes, these things stand
out on it; the chasm-side is

dead.
Repeated
evidence has proved that it can live
on what can not revive
its youth. The sea grows old in it.

Marianne Moore (1887-1972)



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Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

Excerpt from *Burnt Norton II*:

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, there we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

Excerpts from *Little Gidding: V*

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph.

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We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always--
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flames are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)



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Week 3: May 12

if everything happens that can't be done

by e.e. cummings

if everything happens that can't be done
(and anything's righter
than books
could plan)
the stupidest teacher will almost guess
(with a run
skip
around we go yes)
there's nothing as something as one

one hasn't a why or because or although
(and buds know better
than books
don't grow)
one's anything old being everything new
(with a what
which
around we come who)
one's everyanything so

so world is a leaf so a tree is a bough
(and birds sing sweeter
than books
tell how)
so here is away and so your is a my
(with a down
up
around again fly)
forever was never till now

now i love you and you love me
(and books are shuter
than books
can be)
and deep in the high that does nothing but fall
(with a shout

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each
around we go all)
there's somebody calling who's we

we're anything brighter than even the sun
(we're everything greater
than books
might mean)
we're everyanything more than believe
(with a spin
leap
alive we're alive)
we're wonderful one times one

e.e. cummings (1894-1962)

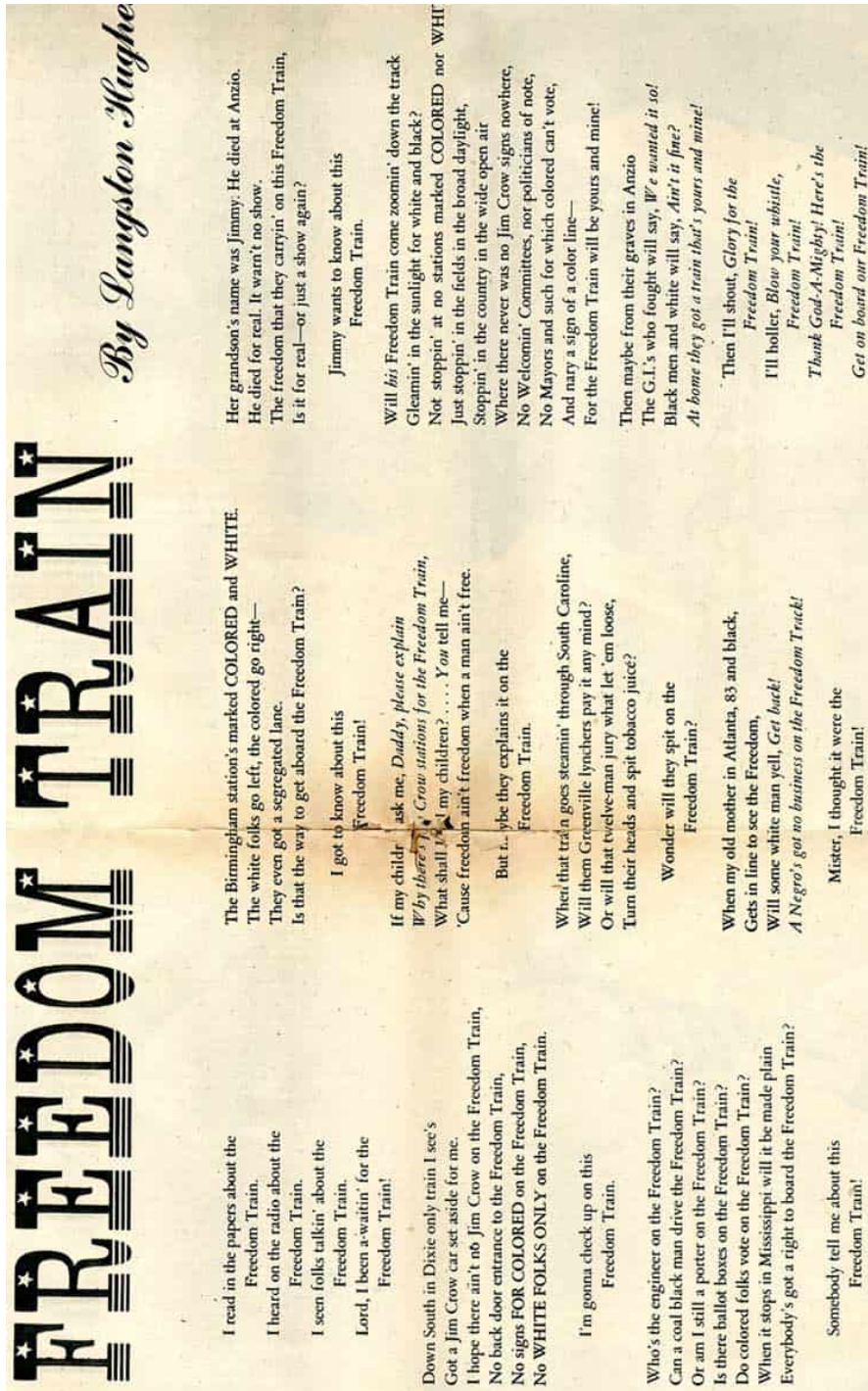


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Week 4: May 19

Freedom Train

by Langston Hughes



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Freedom Train

by Langston Hughes

I read in the papers about the Freedom Train
I heard on the radio about the Freedom Train
I seen folks talking about the Freedom Train
Lord, I've been a-waitin for the Freedom Train!

Washington, Richmond, Durham, Chatanooga, Atlanta
Way cross Georgia.

Lord, Lord, Lord

way down in Dixie the only trains I see's

Got a Jim-Crow coaches set aside for me.

I hope their ain't no Jim Crow on the Freedom Train,

No back door entrance to the Freedom Train,

No sign FOR COLORED on the Freedom Train,

No WHITE FOLKS ONLY on the Freedom Train.

I'm gonna check up.

I'm gonna to check up on this

Freedom Train.

Who is the engineer on the Freedom Train?

Can a coal-black man drive the Freedom Train?

Or am I still a porter on the Freedom Train?

Is there ballot boxes on the Freedom Train?

Do colored folks vote on the Freedom Train?

When it stops in Mississippi, will it be made plain

Everybody's got a right to board the Freedom Train?

I'm gonna check up.

I'm gonna to check up on this

Freedom Train.

The Birmingham station's marked COLORED and WHITE.

The white folks go left

The colored go right.

They even got a segregated lane.

Is that the way to get aboard the Freedom Train?

I'm gonna check up.

I'm gonna to check up on this

Freedom Train.

If my children ask me, Daddy, please explain

Why a Jim Crow stations for the Freedom Train?

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What shall I tell my children?
You tell me, cause freedom ain't freedom when a man ain't free.
My brother named Jimmy died at Anzio
He died for real, and it wasn't no show.
Is this here freedom on the Freedom Train really freedom or a show again?
Now let the Freedom Train come zooming down the track
Gleaming in the sunlight for white and black
Not stoppin' at no stations marked COLORED nor WHITE,
Just stoppin' in the fields in the broad daylight,
Stoppin' in the country in the wide-open air
Where there never was a Jim Crow sign nowhere,
And No Lilly-White Committees, politicians of note,
Nor poll tax layer through which colored can't vote
And there won't be no kinda color lines
The Freedom Train will be yours
And mine.
Then maybe from their graves in Anzio
Black men and white will say, We want it so!
Black men and white will say, Ain't it fine?
At home they got a Freedom train,
A Freedom train,
That's yours and mine!

Langston Hughes (1901-1967)





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Yoga Participant Waiver

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Emergency Contact Phone: _____

I understand that yoga includes physical movements as well as an opportunity for relaxation, stress re-education and relief of muscular tension. As is the case with any physical activity, the risk of injury, even serious or disabling, is always present and cannot be entirely eliminated. If I experience any pain or discomfort, I will listen to my body, discontinue the activity, and ask for support from the instructor. I will continue to breathe smoothly. I assume full responsibility for any and all damages, which may incur through participation.

Yoga is not a substitute for medical attention, examination, diagnosis or treatment. Yoga is not recommended and is not safe under certain medical conditions. By signing, I affirm that a licensed physician has verified my good health and physical condition to participate in such a fitness program. In addition, I will make the instructor aware of any medical conditions or physical limitations before class. If I am pregnant, become pregnant or I am post-natal or post-surgical, my signature verifies that I have my physician's approval to participate. I also affirm that I alone am responsible to decide whether to practice yoga and participation is at my own risk. I hereby agree to irrevocably release and waive any claims that I have now or may have hereafter against the Rosenbach Library & Museum, Liza Seltzer and/or any substitute instructor.

I have read and fully understand and agree to the above terms of this Liability Waiver Agreement. I am signing this agreement voluntarily and recognize that my signature serves as complete and unconditional release of all liability to the greatest extent allowed by law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____