

ENGLISH 280: WRITING AND READING POETRY

Stephen Burt
fall 2004
MWF 10:50-11:50am

Listed poems may all be found in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, fourth edition. Each assignment includes a photocopied packet of additional, modern or contemporary, poems besides those in the *Norton*.

Wed SEPT 8 introductions. What is poetry?

"I"-poems packets given out; your own "I" poems assigned.

Fri SEPT 10 **"I" poems. Persons and places in poems.**

Berryman, *Dream Songs* no. 1 and 14; Clare, "I Am"; Dickinson, poems no. 280 ("I felt a funeral"), 341 ("After great pain"), 754 ("My Life had stood"), 789 ("On a Columnar Self"); Langston Hughes, "Cross"

Mon SEPT 13 "I" poems, cont'd.

Your own "I" poems due at 10am; poems for next week's workshops distributed in class.

Wed SEPT 15 **Workshop.** Sonnet packet given out.

Fri SEPT 17 **Sonnets.** Baxter, from *Jerusalem Sonnets*; Hart Crane, "To Emily Dickinson"; Hill, "The Laurel Axe"; Hopkins, "As kingfishers," "No worst"; Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," "Bright Star"; William Meredith, "The Illiterate"; Merrill, "The Broken Home"; Muldoon, "Why Brownlee Left"; Robinson, "George Crabbe"; Shakespeare, sonnets 29, 30; Tuckerman, "An upper chamber"; Wyatt, "The long love..."

Mon SEPT 27 Sonnets, cont'd. Workshop on "I" poems, cont'd.

Your own sonnets due at 10am; poems for next week's workshop distributed in class.

Wed SEPT 29 **Workshop.** Rhymes, rhythms packets given out.

Fri OCT 1 **Rhymes, rhythms, metres and stanzas; the flow and pulse of a line.**

Auden, "The Shield of Achilles," "Lay your sleeping head, my love"; Bogan, "Medusa," "Roman Fountain"; Brooks, "Boy Breaking Glass"; Donne, "The Good Morrow"; Emerson, "Days"; Hardy, "During Wind and Rain," "Neutral Tones"; Herbert, "The Collar," "The Windows"; Marianne Moore, "The Fish"; Toomer, "Reapers"; William Carlos Williams, "The Yachts"

Mon OCT 4 Rhymes, rhythms, cont'd. Workshop on sonnets, cont'd.

Your own rhyme, rhythm, or stanza poems due at 10am; poems for next week's workshop distributed in class.

Special guest: Rae Armantrout

Tues Oct 5 Rae Armantrout reading, 7:30pm (venue TBA)

Wed OCT 6 **Workshop.** Landscape and prospect packet given out.

Fri OCT 8 **Landscape and prospect poem.**

Jorie Graham, "What The End Is For"; Thomas Gray, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College"; Marianne Moore, "The Steeple-Jack"; Swift, "A Description of the Morning"; Wordsworth, "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey," "The Solitary Reaper"

Mon OCT 11 Landscape and prospect, cont'd. Workshop, cont'd.

Your own landscape and prospect poems due...

Wed OCT 13 NO CLASS—to be made up by evening meeting TBA.

Fri OCT 15 **Workshop.** Song-form and repetition packet given out.

Mon OCT 17 **Song-forms and repetitions.**

Ammons, "The City Limits"; Bishop, "Sestina," "One Art"; Empson, "Missing Dates"; MacNeice, "Bagpipe Music"; Muldoon, "Milkweed and Monarch"; Stevie Smith, "Pretty"; Dylan Thomas, "The force that through the green fuse"; Tichbourne, "Tichbourne's Elegy"

Wed OCT 19 Song-form, cont'd. Workshop, cont'd.

Your own song-form poems due...

Fri OCT 21 **Workshop.** Diction & dialect packets.

Mon OCT 18 **Diction, dialect, levels of language.**

Bishop, "The Armadillo"; Sterling Brown, "Chillen Get Shoes," "Conjured"; Hart Crane, "At Melville's Tomb"; Jarrell, "Next Day"; Langston Hughes, "Bad Luck Card"; Samuel Johnson, "On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet"; Larkin, "Sad Steps"; O'Hara, "How to Get There"

Wed OCT 20 Diction & dialect, cont'd; workshop, cont'd.

Your own diction or dialect poems due. Book review assigned.

Fri OCT 22 **Workshop.** Dramatic monologue, etc. packet.

Mon OCT 24 **Dramatic monologue, persona, plot and dialogue.**

Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess," "Andrea del Sarto"; Dove, "Dusting"; Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; Frost, "The Hill Wife"; Glück, "Gretel in Darkness"; Richard Howard, "Letter of Nicholas..."

Wed OCT 27 Dramatic monologue & persona, cont'd; workshop, cont'd.

Your own dramatic monologue, dialogue or persona poems due.

FALL BREAK

Mon NOV 1 **Workshop.** Catalogue packet.

Wed NOV 3 **Catalogue, list, anaphora, iteration.**

Herbert, "Prayer"; Raine, "A Martian Sends a Postcard Home"; Whitman, excerpts from *Song of Myself*

Fri NOV 5 Catalogue, cont'd; workshop, cont'd.

Your own catalogue poems due.

Mon NOV 8 **Workshop.** Epistle packet.

Wed NOV 10 **Verse-letters, epistles, poems to persons; prose poems.**

Hill, from *Mercian Hymns*; Ben Jonson, "Inviting a Friend to Supper"; Lowell, "Water"; O'Hara, "Why I Am Not a Painter"; Pope, "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"; Pound, "The River-Merchant's Wife"; James Wright, "A Note Left in Jimmy Leonard's Shack"

Fri NOV 12 Epistles & prose poems cont'd.

Your own epistolary or prose poems due.

Mon NOV 15 **Workshop**. Manifesto/ ars poetica packet.

Wed NOV 17 **Manifestos and ars poetica poems**.

Blake, "Introductions" to *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*; Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; Herbert, "Love (3)," "Jordan (1)"; Housman, "Terence, this is stupid stuff..."; Moore, "Poetry"; Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"

Fri NOV 19 Manifestos and ars poetica poems, cont'd.
Workshop, cont'd.

Your own manifestos or ars poetica poems due at 10am.
Manifestos, etc distributed.

Mon NOV 22 **Workshop**. Arguments packet.

Wed NOV 24 **Politics, arguments, anecdotes**.

Marvell, "An Horatian Ode"; Milton, "On the Late Massacre of Saints"; Muldoon, "Meeting the British"; Shelley, "England in 1819"; Walcott, "The Gulf"

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Mon NOV 29 Politics, arguments, cont'd. Workshop, cont'd.
Difficulty & dreams packet.

Wed DEC 1 **Difficulty & dreams**.

Palmer, "Fifth Prose"; Stein, *from* "Stanzas in Meditation"; Muldoon, "Gathering Mushrooms"; Ashbery, "Melodic Trains"

Your own political, argumentative or anecdotal poems due at 10am.

Fri DEC 3 **Workshop**.

Mon DEC 6 Difficulty & dreams, cont'd; workshop, cont'd.
Difficult or oneiric poems due at 10am.

Wed DEC 8 **Workshop**.

Fri DEC 10 **Workshop**. Bring in your own **exemplary poems** (by others) for next week's discussion.

Mon DEC 13 Exemplary poems; more workshop (if necessary).

Wed DEC 15 Wrap-up.

Monday DEC 20 **PORTFOLIOS DUE**.

ENGLISH 41: WRITING AND READING POETRY

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We will be working on our own poems, reading one another's work, and learning from various past and present models: the course is designed to make you a better writer and a better reader of poetry, and to give you a chance to spend time with several kinds and modes of poems in English.

Each week—on days and times the syllabus indicates—you will be asked to submit a new poem of your own; to comment usefully & constructively on other folks' poems in a workshop; and to consider the model poems we'll read. Near the end of the course you will write a prose **manifesto** or an *ars poetica* poem stating or implying your goals as a writer. You will write a **letter** to at least one other poet in our class, describing the strengths & weaknesses you see in his or her poems & the directions you see for her or him as a poet. And you will **revise**—as all poets do—the poems you begun earlier. The manifesto, the letter, and the revised poems together constitute your **portfolio**, which you will turn in at the end of the term; this portfolio and your work in class will largely determine your grade.

Because the class depends so much on the prompt distribution of photocopies to students, **you really need to turn your own poems in on time**. Late work will, in fact, royally screw up your grade. You do, though, get **one pass week** when you don't need to turn in a poem: which week you take is up to you. You will, however, need a manifesto or an *ars poetica* poem in your portfolio at the end of the term, even if you take a pass that week.

The only required text is ***The Norton Anthology of Poetry, current edition, ed. Ferguson, Salter, & Stallworthy***. If you already own a good, *comprehensive* poetry anthology, such as an earlier Norton (not just an anthology of *modern* poetry), and you don't want to buy the new Norton, show me the anthology you own; it might, or might not, be OK. Both books should be in stock at Ruminator Textbooks; let me know if they're not there. We will also be reading photocopies of (largely) contemporary poets from whom you might learn: some poets we'll be seeing regularly, and whose work you might pick up if you can, are

John Ashbery, Lucie Brock-Broido, Paul Muldoon, and C. D. Wright.

I'm easy to contact by office phone or email. In odd exigencies you can also call me at home, at 698 1238; if you call after 11:30pm, however, our cats will eat you.