

Introduction to Poetry: Third Essay Assignment

Final essay due on Monday, May 7 at 2:00 p.m. (Due Friday, May 4 by midnight if you want comments).

Assignment Description & Task:

For this assignment, you have two choices. You can either (A) write another five-page analysis that is much like what you did with the first two assignments, showing me how your understanding of poetry has improved across the semester, or (B) compose *five* imitation poems of *three* of the poets we have discussed in class, along with two pages reflecting on the imitation process.

Option A

I expect that you will identify and discuss the poetic devices present in the poem you choose. The point of this assignment, once again, is to analyze what the poem means as a whole and to describe how its particulars work. The same general directions apply.

The choices, which appear below, are Kim Addonizio's "First Poem for You," H.D.'s "Sea Rose," Wilfred Owens' "Arms and the Boy," and Frank O'Hara's "Poem."

Option B

The task here is to imitate, to the best of your ability, three of the poets we have studied in class. The point is not to make fun of the poets, not to parody them, but to try to emulate their styles in your own productions. You must produce a total of five poems.

In addition, compose a two-page reflective essay on the imitation process.

First Poem for You

Kim Addonizio

I like to touch your tattoos in complete
darkness, when I can't see them. I'm sure of
where they are, know by heart the neat
lines of lightning pulsing just above
your nipple, can find, as if by instinct, the blue
swirls of water on your shoulder where a serpent
twists, facing a dragon. When I pull you

to me, taking you until we're spent
and quiet on the sheets, I love to kiss
the pictures in your skin. They'll last until
you're seared to ashes; whatever persists
or turns to pain between us, they will still
be there. Such permanence is terrifying.
So I touch them in the dark; but touch them, trying.

Sea Rose

H.D.

Rose, harsh rose,
marred and with stint of petals,
meagre flower, thin,
spare of leaf,

more precious
than a wet rose
single on a stem—
you are caught in the drift.

Stunted, with small leaf,
you are flung on the sand,
you are lifted
in the crisp sand
that drives in the wind.

Can the spice-rose
drip such acrid fragrance
hardened in a leaf?

Arms and the Boy

Wilfred Owen

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade
How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood;
Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;
And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-leads
Which long to nuzzle in the hearts of lads,
Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth,
Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple.
There lurk no claws behind his fingers supple;
And God will grow no talons at his heels,
Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls.

Poem

Frank O'Hara

The eager note on my door said "Call me,
call when you get in!" so I quickly threw
a few tangerines into my overnight bag,
straightened my eyelids and shoulders, and

headed straight for the door. It was autumn
by the time I got around the corner, oh all
unwilling to be either pertinent or bemused, but
the leaves were brighter than grass on the sidewalk!

Funny, I thought, that the lights are on this late
and the hall door open; still up at this hour, a
champion jai-alai player like himself? Oh fie!
for shame! What a host, so zealous! And he was

there in the hall, flat on a sheet of blood that
ran down the stairs. I did appreciate it. There are few
hosts who so thoroughly prepare to greet a guest
only casually invited, and that several months ago.