

Introduction to Poetry: Third Essay Assignment

Due Thursday, May 5. If you want your essay back with comments, you will need to give me a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the paper. I will not accept envelopes after class on May 6.

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 at the end of the assignment, are Kim Addonizio's "First Poem for You," John Ashbery's "Paradoxes and Oxymorons," H.D.'s "Sea Rose," 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.

Please do not consider this the "easy" option. The success of your imitations will be subject to a grade.

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.

Paradoxes and Oxymorons

John Ashbery

This poem is concerned with language on a very plain level. Look at it talking to you. You look out a window Or pretend to fidget. You have it but you don't have it. You miss it, it misses you. You miss each other.

This poem is sad because it wants to be yours, and cannot be. What's a plain level? It is that and other things, Bringing a system of them into play. Play? Well, actually, yes, but I consider play to be

A deeper outside thing, a dreamed role-pattern, As in the division of grace these long August days Without proof. Open-ended. And before you know it It gets lost in the steam and chatter of typewriters.

It has been played once more. I think you exist only To tease me into doing it, on your level, and then you aren't there Or have adopted a different attitude. And the poem Has set me softly down beside you. The poem is you.

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?

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.