

## Handout for the Second Week

### Sex Without Love

*Sharon Olds, 1984*

How do they do it, the ones who make love  
without love? Beautiful as dancers,  
gliding over each other like ice-skaters  
over the ice, fingers hooked  
inside each other's bodies, faces  
red as steak, wine, wet as the  
children at birth whose mothers are going to  
give them away. How do they come to the  
come to the come to the God come to the  
still waters, and not love  
the one who came there with them, light  
rising slowly as steam off their joined  
skin? These are the true religious,  
the purists, the pros, the ones who will not  
accept a false Messiah, love the  
priest instead of the God. They do not  
mistake the lover for their own pleasure,  
they are like great runners: they know they are alone  
with the road surface, the cold, the wind,  
the fit of their shoes, their over-all cardio-  
vascular health—just factors, like the partner  
in the bed, and not the truth, which is the  
single body alone in the universe  
against its own best time.

## What Do Women Want?

*Kim Addonizio, 2000*

I want a red dress.

I want it flimsy and cheap,

I want it too tight, I want to wear it  
until someone tears it off me.

I want it sleeveless and backless,  
this dress, so no one has to guess  
what's underneath. I want to walk down  
the street past Thrifty's and the hardware store  
with all those keys glittering in the window,  
past Mr. and Mrs. Wong selling day-old  
donuts in their café, past the Guerra brothers  
slinging pigs from the truck and onto the dolly,  
hoisting the slick snouts over their shoulders.

I want to walk like I'm the only  
woman on earth and I can have my pick.

I want that red dress bad.

I want it to confirm  
your worst fears about me,  
to show you how little I care about you  
or anything except what

I want. When I find it, I'll pull that garment  
from its hanger like I'm choosing a body  
to carry me into this world, through  
the birth-cries and the love-cries too,  
and I'll wear it like bones, like skin,  
it'll be the goddamned  
dress they bury me in.

## Like Boys Next Door

*Timothy Liu, 2001*

channel surfing from baseball scores to late night news for images  
of ourselves in vain no faggots here in uniform only shirts that say  
repent or perish as closets open wide their flaming doors just try on  
the face of a christ that took a lifetime of our suffering to achieve  
last-pick sissies striking our foreheads marked with ash as tongues  
begin to slide like eels in public parks tempting boys who'd flock  
to sport some jockstraps stuffed down throats where teeth had been  
knocked-out a pack of trading-cards some drag from base to base