

## **Introduction to Poetry**

ENCR211A Section 01 – Fall 2010 /MWF 11:10-12:00

Office Hours: Wed/Fri 10-11AM & by appointment

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### **Consider the poet Heather McHugh on *A Singing Kind of Saying*:**

*"Lurking at a conversation's outskirts, I learned a thing or two about the human calls and cackles. (In the back of the Audubon book, poignantly transliterated into English, are the chachalaca's cries: the male says, "Keep it up!"; the female answers "Cut it out!") I listened from the hallway to the liquored pitches of the party animals. I listened from a wooden bench, to how the halleluias were intoned. I listened to the highway ruckus, from a lowland path"* (full interview online at <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15770>).

### **Course Description**

This is a course in the writing of poetry, but perhaps more acutely it is a course in listening. Or at least I hope that it will be. A course in listening, like McHugh, to the voices and happenings around us. A course in listening to our own rhythms—our breathing, our quirky individual or regional vernaculars, the jargons of our distinct academic specialties. A course in listening to how poems can deliver different experiences when read silently and read aloud, or when read by different readers, or when read in different languages. Hopefully, it will also be a course in seeing, in looking acutely at what's around us (things and people and places, both real and imagined). Of course, you'll take all this listening and seeing and see what sorts of poems you can make from it. You'll learn poetic terms that can be used to discuss what it is you're hearing, and you'll read both poems and essays that can be examined as models of how other poets see and hear and get at what we're talking about when we talk about this thing called "poetry."

Our foci will include flexibility, attention to detail, recognition and manipulation of specific poetic techniques, vision, revision, and communicating across difference. Your success in this course will depend on your willingness to experiment, as well as your willingness to engage with other writers—including both traditional and experimental "famous" poets, "less famous" or "marginal" poets, and your fellow students. This means that your grade will have more to do with your growth as a writer and your diligence as a student-of-poetry-writing-and-the-world than it will have to do with whether or not the poems you hand in are "good" or "bad." This is to your benefit, since my likes, dislikes, and aesthetic preferences can be fickle. The bottom line is this: "success" in terms of creative writing is subjective, but I can actually tell if you put time and thought into your work and whether or not you treat your peers with respect, and those are things that matter a lot to me. I hope they matter to you as well.

### **Grade Breakdown**

50% Final Portfolio, including:

- 8 (or more) revised/complete poems
- 1 poem that I have never seen before
- 2-3p. review of a complete collection of poems
- 2-3p. personal statement of poetics/reflection on your relationship to poetry
- 1p. formal write-up of a peer's poem from your day as workshop leader

20% Notebook Keeping

- 4 digital entries
- Midterm notebook review
- Final notebook review

30% Participation

- 11 exercises/drafts of poems turned in on time
- Arriving on time and prepared for class—reading done, comments already written on poems for workshop
- Offering thoughtful observations and asking good questions
- One presentation as a workshop leader
- One brief final presentation on your work, your poetics, and a poet you enjoy

### **Readings and Required Text**

Each week, you will have assigned readings drawn from three categories: sample poems, poetic statements, and poets' notebooks. These may be handouts or I may give you links to e-readings. The reading load will vary, and you will generally be asked to read as a writer—not as a critic. We'll talk about what that may mean for you. In class, we'll use the readings in tangential ways, and we may refer back to readings from earlier in the semester. If it seems that many of you are not doing the assigned reading, then I will institute brief reading quizzes. I would strongly prefer not to have to do this, since it strikes me as a waste of my time and a waste of our limited time together.

Many of the notebook readings will come from The Poet's Notebook: Excerpts from the Notebooks of Contemporary American Poets, edited by Stephan Kuusisto, Deborah Tall, and David Weiss and published by W.W. Norton (ISBN 0-393-31655-6). This is the only book you are required to purchase for this class.

In addition to the assigned readings, I expect you to find, read, and review one full-length collection of poems by a single poet (of your choosing) at some point before the end of the semester

### **Old-Fashioned Paper Notebooks**

A big part of writing good poems is cultivating the types of thinking that lead to good poems. Observing the things around you, observing the people around you, observing your inner life, observing language as it is used in other people's poems and prose, and observing language as it is used in everyday life can all contribute to "thinking like a poet." In light of this, you'll be required to keep some sort of notebook during the semester. It will be up to you whether this notebook becomes a diary, a field journal, a quote book, a place you scrawl poems in progress, or some strange combination of these and other things. I expect that you will make an entry each day. This sounds like a lot, but I'm only asking for maybe five minutes a day. That's 35 minutes a week. Of course, you'll miss a day or two or three. Try to make up for this by spending a little longer with your notebook at times. I will collect your notebook twice, once at midterm and again near the end of the semester. At each of these stages you will either get full credit, half credit, or no credit. I won't read all your entries in detail, but I will flip through them and may stop to read. If you include an easy-to-see note that asks me not to read a certain entry/entries, I will honor your request.

### **Digital Notebook Entries**

As part of the notebook keeping project, I'm also asking you to make (at least) four submissions to a collective digital poets' notebook during the semester. Each entry will consist of one digital image and a brief bit of text. My vision is that the image will be a scan or a photograph depicting a bit of your notebook scrawled in your own hand, but it might also be a screenshot of something cool or a photo of something/someplace you have described. You can view a few sample entries here (this is also where your entries will eventually go up)—<http://notebooks.kebanazek.com/>

If you have access to a digital camera or scanner (think: library), you have two options:

(1) Email me your image as an attachment with the accompanying text in the body of your email. An email entry will only be accompanied by your name if you expressly ask me to include it when I convert the email into a public post.

(2) Visit <http://notebooks.kebanazek.com/wp-login.php> and enter username: student and password: enr211 – create a draft of your notebook entry, enter your name as a tag, and save the draft. Don't publish the draft – I'll use the act of publishing your drafts as an easy way for both you and I to know that I have received your work and given you credit.

Alternately, you may fulfill this requirement in way (3) by making an appointment to visit me during office hours with the hard copy of your notebook, where I will take a photo for you. If selecting this option, you must warn me in advance so that I have a camera with me, and I will expect you to write out the title and text that go with the image.

Weeks when digital entries are due, they are due prior to the start of Friday's class. This is true regardless of how you submit. No late entries will be accepted for credit. Early submissions are encouraged.

### **Writing Exercises, Poems, and Portfolios**

Most weeks, you will be expected to turn in a "best-for-now draft" of a poem. What this means is that I expect your weekly writings to be thoughtful and relatively complete—the word draft does not imply that haste or carelessness is acceptable. It does imply that you need not expect each week's work to be a finished creative masterpiece. Revision and complete reimagining are encouraged. You may find that trying to write a sonnet produces a terrible sonnet, but that you can salvage an idea and a few images from that sonnet and turn it into a much more satisfying free verse poem later in the semester.

Your final portfolio will include at least eight revised poems that bear some relation to these exercises. Your life will be easier if you work on these revisions over the course of the semester and not all at the last minute. Your portfolio will also include at least one brand new poem and some prose writings that show off your engagement with the course and with poetry and poetics in general.

### **Workshop**

We learn to notice what is happening in poems by writing and by reading thoughtfully, but we also learn by talking about poems out loud with each other. Drafts of poems written by your classmates will be an important part of the writing that we study this semester, and how you participate in workshop will determine a large portion of your participation grade.

Each poet will have three opportunities to have one of his/her poems workshopped—two shorter workshops during the first half of the semester and one longer workshop in the second half of the semester.

Each workshop week, you will be responsible for reading and commenting on 5-10 student poems. It is my expectation that you will read the poems prior to class and that you will come with at least one pre-prepared observation for each poem and one question for each poet—these should be written on your copy of the poem before class. Since our class period is short, these prepared observations help us use our time well. For each "long" workshop in the second half of the semester, a presenter will be assigned to introduce the poem and keep conversation going.

Workshop comments should often include "scientific observations," comparisons to the texts we are reading, suggestions for expansion, and philosophical or cultural questions for the writer to consider. Our conversations and critiques will include neither empty praise nor personal attacks—offensive comments, comments that can be construed as critiques of the writer as a person, and/or comments that are just plain mean will not be tolerated.

### **Attendance**

This is a small discussion-based class, and how the class functions as a community is important. Your attendance is important to your classmates' experiences, which makes showing up regularly and on-time important and about more than just your individual grade. If you miss class, even for a good reason, it is your responsibility to make sure that I receive any assignments *prior* to the class when they are due and that you make sure to get copies of any readings/find out what you missed.

If you miss more than three classes during the semester, or if you fail to show up on a day when you are presenting/your work is being reviewed in workshop without warning me prior to class, your grade will suffer as follows:

4 absences/miss one presentation or workshop	– final grade drops one full letter grade
5 absences	– final grade drops two full letter grades
6 absences/miss two presentations or workshops	– final grade drops three full letter grades
7 absences/miss three presentations or workshops	– automatic failure

I reserve the right to modify this system in light of personal emergencies or unforeseeable circumstances. If for any reason you know that you will be missing class, or if you expect to run into trouble with this policy, come talk to me before there's a problem. Also, plan to get sick: don't use up your three absences in the first three weeks.

### **Academic Conduct**

Even though this is a creative writing class and artists often draw on the works of others for inspiration, you must still abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code, which means avoiding plagiarism. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." This means that when you hand in a poem or other writing that includes the thoughts/phrases of others—which you will—you need to acknowledge where those thoughts/phrases came from.

### **Communication / Office Hours / Cell Phones**

If you ever have questions about readings, assignments, or your progress in the course, or if you want to continue a discussion that starts in class, or if you have any concerns about how class in general is progressing, you should feel free to drop by during my office hours. If my office hours are inconvenient, feel free to make an appointment, and we can talk at a time that works with your schedule. I'm also happy to answer questions via university email. Don't expect to be able to text or IM me or to hand in anything other than digital notebook entries via email. Don't expect instant replies, especially late at night or on the weekend.

Out of respect for your classmates, I expect that you'll shut off your phone's ringer and avoid texting during class. If for some reason you absolutely need to have your phone out in class (think Fire/EMS job—unavoidable circumstances tied to being a responsible adult), it's your job to let me know in advance why I shouldn't penalize you.

### **Students with Disabilities**

I'm committed to accommodating any qualified students with disabilities in appropriate ways. Please speak with me after class or during office hours and be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator, so I can know how to help.

*ENCR211A.01 – Fall 2010 – Tentative Schedule (subject to change/revision)*

**WK 1 – Getting Started**

Introductions. Start thinking about sound, silence, and pattern. Begin notebooks.

- Poems: Richard Siken "The Love Song of the Square Root of Minus One (i)" (in class Mon.);  
excerpt from Inger Christensen's *Alphabet* (start in class Wed; finish for Fri.)
- Poetics Reading: John Cage's "Themes and Variations" (excerpt; in class Mon.)  
Janet Zweig "Ars Combinatoria" (for Wed.)  
<http://www.janetzweig.com/zweig.ars-combinatoria.pdf>
- Notebook Reading: X.J. Kennedy, p121-133 (skim and find a favorite entry for Fri.)

**WK 2 – Accentual Meter**

Think about Anglo-Saxon Origins and Oral Traditions. Note: No Class on Monday for Labor Day.

- Poems: Selected folk rhymes and Richard Wilbur "Junk" (for Wed.); W.H. Auden "September 1,  
1939" and W.B. Yeats "Easter 1916" (for Fri.)
- Poetics Readings: Robert Bringhurst from *Everywhere Being is Dancing* (for Wed.)  
Ellen Bryant Voight from *The Art of Syntax* (for Fri.)
- Notebook Reading: J.D. McClatchy, p153-163 (skim and find a favorite entry for Fri.)

*Poetic Exercise #1 Due on Friday 9/10 – draft of a poem (10+ lines) in an accentual meter*

*Digital Notebook Entry #1 – due before class begins on Friday*

**WK 3 – Accentual Syllabic Meter**

Think about syllabic meters, French influence on Anglo-Saxon, iambic pentameter, and diction. Focus on blank verse.

- Poems: Prospero's farewell to his magic and the invocation to Book I of *Paradise Lost* (for Mon.);  
Frank O'Hara "A True Account of Talking to the Sun," Ellen Bryant Voight "Blue Ridge,"  
Gary Snyder "Milton by Firelight" (for Wed.)
- Poetics Readings: Reference page for types of meter (for Mon.)
- Notebook Reading: From Rilke's Letters and fragment of an elegy (find a favorite idea for Fri.)

*Exercise due in class on Wednesday 9/15 – scan and lineate the prose passage in your packet*

*Poetic Exercise #2 Due on Friday 9/17 – draft of a poem (10+ lines) in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter)*

**WK 4 – Rhyme and Meter**

Think about how rhyme interacts with syllabic meters. Consider couplets and the sonnet.

- Poems: Rainier Maria Rilke "Sonnets to Orpheus" I, II, IX, XIII, XIV (for Mon.)
- Poetics Readings: from *How to Make a Poem* (for Mon.)
- Workshop: Prepare group A1 for Wed. and group A2 for Fri.

*Poetic Exercise #3 Due on Friday 9/24 – draft of a sonnet*

**WK 5 – Repetition: Fixed Forms and Patterns**

Think about repetitions of words, lines, and phrases. Consider the villanelle and the ghazal.

- Poems: Heather McHugh "Ghazal of the Better-Unbegun," Agha Shahid Ali "Even the Rain,"  
selections from Adrienne Rich (for Mon.)
- Poetics Readings: Levertov on Organic Form (for Mon.); from *How to Make a Poem* (for Wed.)
- Notebook Reading: Alice Fulton, p 41-64 (skim and find a favorite entry for Fri)
- Workshop: Prepare group B1 for Wed. and group B2 for Fri.

*Poetic Exercise #4 Due on Friday 10/1 – draft of a villanelle OR a ghazal*

*Digital Notebook Entry #2 – due before class begins on Friday*

## **WK 6 – Images, Imagism, and the Natural World in Poems**

Begin study of free verse. Think about the traditions of the pastoral and transcendentalism, plus how images work.

Poems: From Emerson, Pound, Williams, and Japanese Poetry (for Mon); Mark Doty "Broadway" (for Wed); excerpt from Francis Ponge's *Mute Objects of Expression* (for Fri).  
Poetics Readings: From Pound, Williams, and Japanese Poetry (for Mon.); Doty (for Wed)  
Workshop: Prepare group A1 for Wed. and group A2 for Fri.

*Poetic Exercise #5 Due on Friday 10/8 – draft of a free verse poem that pays acute attention to seeing*

## **WK 7 – Narrative Poetry: Stories in Poems**

Think about different ways that stories—our own and those of others—can appear in poems.

Poems: Excerpt from *Paterson* by Williams; Larry Levis, Marianne Moore, C.D. Wright, Heather McHugh "What He Thought"  
Notebook Readings: Heather McHugh, p178-189 (for Fri.)  
Workshop: Prepare group B1 for Wed. and group B2 for Fri.

*Poetic Exercise #6 Due on Friday 10/15 – draft of a poem that addresses a story in some way*

## **WK 8 – Midterm Conferences**

Class cancelled on Wed. 10/20 and Fri. 10/22 for mandatory individual conferences.

Notebook Readings: From Charles Simic *The Monster Loves His Labyrinth* (for Mon.)  
Revisit McHugh and any other favorite notebook entries that we missed.

Bring to Conference: Your entire working folder with drafts of everything you've written, a revision of one poem, at least one question for me, plus a physical copy of the poetry collection you have chosen to read in full (you need not be reading it yet, but you might want to think about starting soon).

## **WK 9 – Repetition Revisited: Howl and the Beats**

Revisit some ways that repetition can work. Consider the Beats, their era, and politics in poems.

Poems: Ginsberg "Howl," O'Hara "Ave Maria" (for Mon.); Frank Stafford excerpt from "The Battlefield Where the Moon Says I Love You" (for Wed.)  
Poetics Readings: Ginsberg on Howl (for Mon.)  
Baraka "How We Sound" (for Wed.)  
Notebook Reading: Carolyn Forché, p 31-42 (for Fri.)  
Workshop: Prepare group A1 (for Wed.)

*Poetic Exercise #7 Due on Friday 10/29 – draft of a long poem with long lines that pays attention to repetition.*

## **WK 10 – "Intellectual" Poetries, Surrealism, Modernisms and Postmodernisms**

Take a look at some "difficult" poetries. Expand our definitions of poetry. Consider complexity and simplicity.

Poems: Stein, Cummings, Ashbury, Alice Fulton, Myung Mi Kim, et al.  
Poetics Readings: Excerpts from an e.e. Cummings nonlecture (for Mon.)  
Alice Fulton essay (for Wed.)  
Workshop: Prepare group A2 (for Wed.)

*Poetic Exercise #8 Due on Friday 11/5 – draft of a poem that pushes your limits; consider automatic writing and in-class prompts.*  
*Digital Notebook Entry #3 – due before class begins on Friday*

### **WK 11 – Continue Surveying the Breadth of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century Poetry**

Keep exploring. If the class is generally interested, we may approach the interplay between poetry and other art forms.

Poems: Selected poems from the anthology "American Hybrid" and Richard Siken's *Crush*  
Poetics Reading: Eileen Myles "What I Saw" (for Mon.)  
Notebook Reading: Joy Harjo, p77-88 (for Fri.)  
Workshop: Prepare group B1 (for Wed.)

*Poetic Exercise #9 Due on Friday 11/12 – draft of a poem: any form/style you choose.*

### **WK 12 – Brief Look at Some International Poetry in Translation**

Consider alternate notions of aesthetics.

Poems: May include Basho, Tu Fu, the Tao Te Ching, Vallejo, Coral Bracho, Neruda, et al...  
Workshop: Prepare group B2 (for Wed.)

*Poetic Exercise #10 Due on Friday 11/19 – dramatic revision of a poem from earlier in the semester.*

### **WK 13 – Thanksgiving Week**

We will take care of any necessary catch-up and do some generative writing on Mon. 11/22.

There will be no class on Wed. 11/24 or Fri. 11/26. It would be smart to use this time for working on revisions, and it would be smart to finish reading and reviewing the complete collection that you have selected (if you haven't already).

### **WK 14 – Hybrids and Analogs: Prose Poems and Lyric Essays**

Some ways of looking at how poetic principles work in prose and "non-traditional" contexts.

Prose/Poems: Readings from Anne Carson's *NOX* and *Plainwater*, John D'Agata's *Halls of Fame* (for Mon);  
excerpts from the Firewheel Prose Poem Anthology (for Fri).  
Poetics Readings: Excerpts from the *Seneca Review* (for Wed.)

*Poetic Exercise #11 Due on Friday 12/3 – draft of a poem that mixes conventions of prose and poetry*  
*Digital Notebook Entry #4 – due before class begins on Friday*

### **WK 15 – Revisions, Statements of Poetics, and Presentations**

Final presentations. *Be working on revisions, reviews, and your statement of poetics!*

*Friday: Hand in your entire hard-copy notebook for my review.*

### **WK 16 – Last Day of Class – Portfolios Due at Start of Class on Mon. 12/13**

ENCR211A.01 - Lesson Plan/Class Schedule - Friday - October 8, 2010

*Intro/ Reading Activity: 9-18 minutes.*

*Objectives: allow time for students to begin connecting the week's informal "notebook" reading to their own experiences of the world and/ or their writing and/ or other readings for the class. Make use of the assigned reading in a timely manner so students do future reading.*

1st prompt: Describe your reaction to the place presented in the "Pine Woods Notebook." Does it feel familiar? Does it feel strange? Are the images ones that you recognize? Are there metaphors or departures from the singular notion of the pine forest that provoke your interest?

2nd prompt: Take a few minutes to reflect on how this "notebook" is similar to other notebooks that we've read and how it is different. OR reflect on how it relates to your own practice of notebook keeping--either in terms of your material notebook or your digital notebook entries. You might think of both your notebook and this notebook in terms of what an introductory note would look like (in the style of the notebook collection we're using for this class.)

*Note:* there are four students scheduled for workshop on this day, but one has forfeited his slot by failing to turn in poem on time; if he produces a valid/ documented reason before Wednesday's class, it is possible that we will have four student poems to discuss and I will omit part 3 in class.

3rd prompt: Think about a particular place that you often visit in your everyday life--not your house, apartment or dorm room. Begin trying to describe it in the manner of the "Pine Woods Notebook."

Transition: brief comment on value of noticing place as we read *and* write.

*Workshop 27-36 minutes: 3-4 students, approximately 9 minutes each.*

--Based on a model established in conjunction with students earlier in the semester; writer does not speak during workshop, but has a chance to address anything that was raised in class or ask pointed questions before we move on.

*Workshop Objectives: create an environment where students engage in conversation with each other and offer their peers useful observations and suggestions for revision or expansion of the current poem or ideas for how another piece of writing might come out of the one at hand.*

*Encourage students to draw on readings for comparison and begin defining their own aesthetics; reinforce students' confidence in their own reading/ critiquing skills so they can ask the same types of questions we ask in workshop of their own poems.*

*By collecting written workshop comments at the end of class, monitor the quality of comments and give quieter students an opportunity to gain participation credit by doing thoughtful written work.*

*Wrap-up 3-5 minutes.*

Look forward to next week (focus on storytelling/ narrative in poems). Read for Monday: Excerpt from WCW *Paterson*, poems from Larry Levis and Marianne Moore. Hand in this week's draft (a poem that pays acute attention to seeing).

**V. 3 - Why I Am Not a Painter**

I see Mike's painting called SARDINES  
it ORANGES And one day in a gallery  
orange yet It's twelve poems I call  
is finished and I haven't mentioned  
prose I am a real poet My poem  
and life Days go by It is even in  
words of how terrible orange is  
so much more not of orange of  
Then another page There should be  
whole page of words not lines  
about orange Pretty soon it is a  
a color orange I write a line  
But me One day I am thinking of

letters It was too much Mike says.  
All that's left is just  
finished Where's SARDINES  
go by I drop in The painting is  
is going on and I go and the days  
and I drop in again The painting  
Oh I go and the days go by  
Yes it needed something there  
up You have SARDINES in it  
says I drink we drink I look  
Sit down and have a drink he  
is starting a painting I drop in  
for instance Mike Goldberg

a painter but I am not Well  
Why I think I would rather be  
I am not a painter I am a poet

**V.2 - Why I Am Not a Painter**

I am not a painter I am a poet.  
be rather would I think I Why  
a painter but I am not Well

for instance Mike Goldberg  
in drop I painting a starting is  
Sit down and have a drink he  
Look I drink we drink I says  
up You have SARDINES in it  
There something needed it yes  
Oh I go and the days go by  
Painting the again in drop I and  
is going on and I go and the days  
is painting the in drop I by go  
finished Where's SARDINES  
just is left that's all  
letters It was too much Mike says

Of thinking am I day one me but  
a color orange I write a line  
a is it soon pretty orange about  
whole page of words not lines  
Be should there page another then  
so much more not of orange of  
is orange terrible how of words  
and life Days go by It is even in  
poem my poet a am real prose  
mentioned haven't I and finished is  
orange yet It's twelve poems I call  
gallery a in day one and oranges it  
I see Mike's painting called SARDINES

**V.1 - Why I Am Not a Painter**

Poet a am I painter a not am I  
be rather would I think I Why  
well, not am I but painter a

for instance, Mike Goldberg  
in drop I painting a starting is  
he drink a have and down sit  
Look I drink we drink I says  
It in SARDINES have you up  
There something needed it yes  
By go days the and go I Oh  
Painting the again in drop I and  
Days the and go I and on going is  
is painting the in drop I by go  
SARDINES Where's finished  
just is left that's all  
says Mike much too was it letters

Of thinking am I day one me but  
Line a write I orange color a  
a is it soon pretty orange about  
lines not words of page whole  
Be should there page another then  
Of orange of not more much so  
is orange terrible how of words  
in even is it by go days life and  
poem my poet a am real prose  
mentioned haven't I and finished is  
call I poems twelve it's yet orange  
gallery a in day one and oranges it  
SARDINES called painting Mike's see I

#### V. 4 - Why I Am Not a Painter

I am not a painter, I am a poet.  
Why? I think I would rather be  
a painter, but I am not. Well,

for instance, Mike Goldberg  
is starting a painting. I drop in.  
"Sit down and have a drink" he  
says. I drink; we drink. I look  
up. "You have SARDINES in it."  
"Yes, it needed something there."  
"Oh." I go and the days go by  
and I drop in again. The painting  
is going on, and I go, and the days  
go by. I drop in. The painting is  
finished. "Where's SARDINES?"  
All that's left is just  
letters, "It was too much," Mike says.

But me? One day I am thinking of  
a color: orange. I write a line  
about orange. Pretty soon it is a  
whole page of words, not lines.  
Then another page. There should be  
so much more, not of orange, of  
words, of how terrible orange is  
and life. Days go by. It is even in  
prose, I am a real poet. My poem  
is finished and I haven't mentioned  
orange yet. It's twelve poems, I call  
it ORANGES. And one day in a gallery  
I see Mike's painting, called SARDINES.

**Required Contents:***Cover page-- your name and a title for the portfolio**A statement of poetics/ reflective introduction**8 (or more) complete, revised poems**1 (or more) poem(s) that I have never seen before**Review of a complete collection of poems**Formal write-up of a peer's poem from your day as workshop leader**Any additional materials that you think showcase your semester's accomplishments*

Worth 50% of your final grade, the portfolio is meant to represent all the time and thought that you have put into writing, revising, and thinking about poetry this semester. It should be organized, with numbered pages, and bound somehow (for example: presented in a slim, appropriately sized binder or in a non-pocket folder with a central binding or neatly stapled and placed in a labeled manila folder).

**The Statement of Poetics (Minimum Length: 2-3 Typed, Double-Spaced Pages)**

You might consider this piece of prose writing as a reflective introduction to the specific poems that you include in the portfolio, or you might consider it as a more general introduction to what you--as a particular poet--find important, interesting, or possible in terms of poetry. Whether this takes the form of a more formal, academic piece of writing or a creative, lyric essay is up to you. You might take any one of the poetics essays that we've read as a model. Many of the notebook entries we've read could also be taken as either starting points of models.

This piece of writing might attempt to answer one or more of the following questions:

What is poetry? What draws you to particular poems? What pushes you away from other poems? How do the poets you most admire use language? What particular poetic device is most interesting to you and why? How does your personal history impact the way you read and write poetry?

Has the way that you think about poetry changed at all this semester? Have any of the poets that you encountered this semester changed the way you think about language, form, or the world? Are there particular lines or quotes that stuck you as particularly true? If so, you might include brief quotes and explain your understanding of them.

How do you approach revision? What elements of writing happen quickly and intuitively for you, and which elements require more deliberate, conscious effort? Are there particular "missteps" that your early drafts are prone to? If so, how do you recognize and overcome them?

This statement will be the first thing that I read when I sit down to grade--it should set the tone for everything else in your portfolio. Typographical errors, grammatical errors, and vague platitudes will all have a negative impact on your grade. Even though it is not long, think of it as a serious piece of writing. If you do not consider yourself an excellent prose writer--or even if you do--it might be smart for you to have a friend or a tutor from the writing center help you edit and revise this before turning it in, and/or you might meet with me outside class to talk about an early draft.

**The Book Review (Minimum Length: 2-3 Typed, Double-Spaced Pages)**

This is a review in two respects: (1) it should address the little details of the particular text, and (2) it should address your subjective experience as a reader of the text as a whole. You might check out the CutBank reviews website for some ideas about what a review of a book of poems can look like--<http://cutbankpoetry.blogspot.com/>

This piece of writing might also attempt to answer one or more of the following questions:

What poem from the collection stood out the most? Why? Somewhere in the review, you should pick at least two poems and at least a few lines from each--offer them as quotes and look at them as closely as possible. Many of the questions that appear on your sheet of "workshop guidelines" would be excellent things to address here.

Was reading a collection different from reading single poems for you? Were there particular subjects, themes, or formal moves that recurred in several poems? Are there other poets that this poet reminds you of? If so, how are they similar, and how are they dissimilar? Why did you select this poet, and did you get what you expected?

During the second half of the semester, we will workshop using a slightly different model. During each class period, we'll look at 2-3 poets, rather than 4-5. This means that we'll have longer to spend on each poem (most likely 12-15 minutes).

In general, you should continue to prepare for workshop as you have been: read each poem carefully, consider what the poet is doing with language and in terms of subject matter, offer keen observations and kindly worded suggestions for revision.

\* Having a workshop leader doesn't exempt others from preparing. Being the workshop leader doesn't mean controlling conversation, it just means starting it off and being available to help it along if necessary.

**Requirements:**

The workshop leader is expected to spend a little extra time with the poem he or she is presenting--to become the resident "expert" on it. On your day as workshop leader, you have three jobs:

- (1) Open discussion by offering an overview of some of the mechanics of the poem. Select at least one poetic technique that you see being used and either define it for us or remind us of the definition (if it's something we've already talked about).
- (2) Offer at least one insight that a cold reading might not give. This might mean looking up an important or confusing word that appears in the poem and looking into its etymology (the history of the word). It might include looking up a topic the poem addresses--researching a biological process, a place, or a psychological state. It might include finding a published poem that this one resembles in some way, reading a portion of it in class, and asking a question about the relationship.
- (3) Come with at least three questions that might help jumpstart conversation if it stalls out.

It is appropriate for introductory remarks to last 3-5 minutes--long enough to be interesting/unique, but short enough to leave plenty of time for full-class discussion.

**The Written Report:**

Either before or after your day as workshop leader, you should produce a typed paper (no less than a full, double-spaced page, most likely longer than that) that addresses the above three points. This may be handed in on the day of your presentation; it must be handed in no later than the beginning of the class period after your presentation. A copy of it will be given to the writer whose poem you led workshop for, and you will include a copy of it in your portfolio at the end of the semester.

### *Portfolio Grade Descriptors*

**A** Work is--without exception--thoughtful and complete. The poet articulates his/her ideas about poetry clearly, engages with other writers/thinkers, and takes risks that work in his/her creative writing. It is clear that the poet has revised, and those revisions improve poems. **Overall, this is an exceptional portfolio in all regards.**

**B** Work is--without exception--thoughtful and complete. The prose may not be flawless, but the poet articulates some engaging ideas about poetry. These poems have been revised thoughtfully, and they take risks--some of which work and some of which may not be entirely effective. **Overall, this is an above-average portfolio in all regards.**

**C** Work is generally thoughtful and complete. The prose writings are acceptable, but problems of grammar or logic may show signs that the poet hasn't proofread or that he/she should have consulted with the writing center, the instructor, or others on technical matters prior to handing in the work. The poems may be of mixed quality, they may be strong poems that don't show signs of risk taking, or there may be very little revision that has taken place. **Overall, this is an acceptable but average portfolio.**

**D** **This is the best possible grade that an incomplete portfolio may receive.** One minor component may be missing and/or some of the prose writings may be incomplete, sloppy, or off topic. Many of the poems may be unrevised, and the poet may not show signs of engaging with the ideas of others.

**F** **This portfolio does not meet the expectations of the course.** It is missing important components and/or has clearly been slapped together at the last minute without regard for the fact that this a document representing an entire semester's work. It is clear that the assignment was misunderstood or that it has not been taken seriously.

Student Name:

Portfolio Grading Rubric: ENCR211A.01 Fall 2010 - 50% of Final Grade -

Flexibility/Willingness to Take Risks:

<- exceptional / very strong / strong / adequate / below expectations ->

Attention to Detail in Your Own Work and in the Work of Others:

<- exceptional / very strong / strong / adequate / below expectations ->

Recognition and Manipulation of Poetic Techniques:

<- exceptional / very strong / strong / adequate / below expectations ->

Vision/Application of the Ideas in Your Statement of Poetics:

<- exceptional / very strong / strong / adequate / below expectations ->

Revision/Willingness and Ability to Transform Your Work:

<- exceptional / very strong / strong / adequate / below expectations ->

Communicating Across Differences/Openness to Suggestions from Others:

<- exceptional / very strong / strong / adequate / below expectations ->

Final Comments:

All Required Components Included:    Yes    No

Components:

11 exercises/drafts of poems turned in on time:

Arriving on time and prepared for class—reading done, comments already written on poems for workshop:

Offering thoughtful observations and asking good questions:

One presentation as a workshop leader:

One brief final presentation on your work, your poetics, and a poet you enjoy:

General Comments:

Digital Entry 1: full / half / no credit    Digital Entry 2: full / half / no credit    Digital Entry 3: full / half / no credit    Digital Entry 4: full / half / no credit

Midterm Notebook Review: full / half / no credit

Final Notebook Review: full / half / no credit

**Summary:**      **Number of Absences/Grade Adjustment for Absences -**

**Participation Grade -**

**Notebook Grade -**

**Portfolio Grade -**

**Final Grade -**

