Eng 2003-001: Poetry workshop

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John Martone’s Poetry Workshop  
Summer 2008

Description

This is an introduction to the writing of poetry today, and since no writing is done in a vacuum (we learn every word we know from someone else), we will read our way through some of the important work of the recent past, work which has shaped how we experience the world, think, speak and write. I expect our class time to be devoted about equally to assigned reading and student writing, and I expect our discussions to be animated and far-ranging.

Texts

Allen, The Postmoderns
Basho/Corman, Back Roads to Far Towns
Fowlie, Rimbaud: Complete Works
Rothenberg, Poems for the Millennium, vols. 1 and 2.

Week 1

Questions/problems/topics

Nature of poetry / poetry in nature
Mind-forged manacles
Cleansing the doors of perception
The image as what is
Language and Poetic language

Ur-poetry and the radical as root
Poetry and anti-poetry

Readings

Rimbaud, Les illuminations (Fowlie 212-257)
DADA (Rothenberg 289-326)
And the following (also from Rothenberg)
Wolfli, 83-85
Apollinaire, 119, 128-129
Marinetti, 199.
Depero, 213-215.
Kamensky, 222.
Johnny John, 756.
MacLow, 772.
Bacharach, 790-792.
Gaffarel, 793.

Week 2

Questions/problems/topics

Investigating likeness
Waking and dream worlds
Associational imagery
Poetry of Leaping

Readings

Surrealism (Rothenberg 465-517)
Also from Rothenberg:
Jacob, 112-118.
Apollinaire, 119-131.
Reverdy, 180-184.
Huidobro, 185-189

Writing

concrete poems
found poems
chance operations

dream journal
associational poems

Writing
Weeks 3-4

Questions / problems / topics
The ordinary
"Either everything is a miracle or nothing is."
The historical document
The uses of history
Persona

Readings
Readings from Allen and Butterick.
Levertov, 101-112
Creeley, 164-172
Blackburn, 155-162

Readings from Rothenberg:
Reznikoff, 546-551.
Ungaretti, 177.
Williams, 529-533.
Hughes, 651-655.

Writing
poems in imagist/objectivist / projectivist modes

Week 5

Questions / problems / topics
Translation
Tradition
Japanese aesthetics

Readings
Basho/ Corman, Back Roads...
Issa <http://haikuguy.com/issa/> and
<http://www.jstor.org/view/00270741/di995072/99p0069s/0>
John Perlman, Dinner

Writing
haiku journal

Week 6

Questions / problems / topics
One art / contemporary poetry
and the other arts

Readings
Selected performance pieces
Art Writing
Robert Smithson

Writing
final portfolio and readings

London.

I wander through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet,
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear:

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackening church appals,
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace-walls.

But most, through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the marriage-hearse.

Wm Blake