

First Week

Orientation

I. Poetry

1. Write about what we know or do not know?

“No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader.” Robert Frost

“Here I stand/looking out my window/and I am important”

2. Show, not tell

3. Sounds: hush/please be quiet/shut up

4. Subjects: family, death and grief, the erotic, the shadow, witnessing, place. . .

*”Erotica is what I like. Pornography is what *you* like.”

* subject matter is not the issue; depth of imagination, and its articulation in language, is.

II. Practice for this week:

1. Write a poem to a particular lover, designed to make him or her wild with passion.

Or

2. Write a poem that is a conversation between you and a politically powerful figure from any moment in history.

III. Screenplay

IV. Magazine writing

Interview

From The River Merchant's Wife by Ezra Pound

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever, and forever

長干行 李白

妾髮初覆額，折花門前劇。郎騎竹馬來，遶床弄青梅。

同居長干裡，兩小無嫌猜。十四為君婦，羞顏未嘗開。

低頭向暗壁，千喚不一回。十五始展眉，願同塵與灰。

常存抱柱信，豈上望夫臺。十六君遠行，瞿塘濫灑堆。

五月不可觸，猿聲天上哀。門前遲行跡，一一生綠苔。

苔深不能掃，落葉秋風早。八月蝴蝶黃，雙飛西園草。

感此傷妾心，坐愁紅顏老。早晚下三巴，預將書報家。

相迎不道遠，直至長風沙。

In a Station of the Metro Ezra Pound

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough.

I stepped into the metro and saw faces in the crowd that looked like tree blossoms.

The Morning Baking Carolyn Forché

Grandma come back, I forgot

How much lard for these rolls?

Think you can put yourself in the ground

Like plain potatoes and grow in Ohio?

I am damn sick of getting fat like you

Think you can lie through your Slovak?

Tell filthy stories about the blood sausage?

Pish-pish nights at the virgin in Detroit?

I blame your raising me up for my Slav tongue

You beat me up out back, taught me to dance

I'll tell you I don't remember any kind of bread

Your wavy loaves of flesh

Stink through my sleep

The stars on your silk robe

But I'm glad I'll look when I'm old

Like a gypsy dusha hauling milk

Wake Tess Gallagher

Three nights you lay in our house.
Three nights in the chill of the body
Did I want to prove how surely
I'd been left behind? In the room's great dark
I climbed up beside you onto our high bed, bed
we'd loved in and slept in, married
and unmarried

There was a halo of cold around you
as if the body's messages carry farther
in death, my own warmth taking on the silver-white
of a voice sent unbroken across snow just to hear
itself in its clarity of calling. We were dead
a little while together then, serene
and afloat on the strange broad canopy
of the abandoned world.

The Groundfall Pear Jane Hirshfield

It is the one he chooses,
yellow, plump, a little bruised
on one side from falling.
That place he takes first.

From "Pardon" Jane Kenyon

A piece of burned meat
wears my clothes, speaks
in my voice, dispatches obligations
haltingly, or not at all.

It is tired of trying
to be stouthearted, tired
beyond measure

Do You Want a Chicken Sandwich Norman Stock

the time my mother opened the door
to the living room and saw me on my knees
with my hard cock in my hand jerking off
in front of the television set with a hot magazine at my side
and she gasped and quickly shut the door
but she did finish what she started to say
when she first pushed it open which was
do you want a chicken sandwich
okay I probably said to the door and put my cock back in my pants
and went and ate my chicken sandwich
while in the next room through all of this embarrassment
my father was playing the violin always the same old song

Song of Napalm Bruce Weigl

After the storm, after the rain stopped pounding
we stood in the doorway watching horses
walk off lazily across the pasture's hill.
We stared through the black screen,
our vision altered by the distance
so I thought I saw a mist. . .

The Palms Charlie Smith

When the sun went down in L.A. that day I was driving
a rental car east on Sunset Boulevard,
worn down by the endless internal battering,
and looked back to see the vivid capacious burned ocean light,
the dust in the air that made the light palpable and beautiful. . .

Compare the two dialogues

Customer: It doesn't fit.

Salesman: what hurts?

Customer: The insole.

Salesman: I fixed it.

Customer: No, you didn't.

Salesman: Yes, I did.

Customer: I relied on you.

Salesman: I tried to help.

Customer: Well, you didn't.

Salesman: Let me try again.

Customer: I'm shopping somewhere else!

Salesman: Good riddance.

The teacher said, "Where're you going?"

She said, "I'm going to see Shou-Nan."

I said, "What for?"

She said, "To have a test."

I said, "Test on what?"

She said, "On my knowledge about a writer."

He said, "I've a different test. On my understanding of a poem."

I said, "She, about a writer; you, about a poem."

She said, "It's late! Let's go!"