Poetry masterclass: At the cutting edge

Start date 7 November 2011          End date 11 November 2011

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Roger Garfitt          Course code 1112NRX047

Director of Public Programmes and Professional Studies: Dr Ian Baxter

For further information on this course, please contact Linda Fisher, Academic Programme Manager on 01223 746218
Sandy Haylock, Administrative Secretary on 01223 746227

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

A freelance writer ever since he won the Gregory Award in 1974, Roger Garfitt has been Poetry Critic of the London Magazine, Editor of Poetry Review, Writing Fellow at the University of East Anglia and Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Swansea University. He performs Poetry & Jazz with the John Williams Septet and jazz composer Nikki Iles, and Poetry & Dulcimer Music with Sue Harris on the hammered dulcimer. His Selected Poems are published by Carcanet and Cape will publish his memoir, The Horseman’s Word, has just been published by Jonathan Cape.
Course Programme

Monday 7 November 2011
Please plan to arrive between 2:00 pm and 3:30 pm. You can meet other course members at Tea, which will be served in the bar at 4.00pm. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

4.30 pm  Opening Seminar on Jorie Graham’s Sea Change. Please bring two of your own poems to be photocopied for the Tuesday evening reading

7.15 pm  Dinner

8.30 pm – 10.00 pm  Second Seminar on Jorie Graham’s Sea Change

10.00 pm  Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Tuesday 8 November 2011

8.00 am  Breakfast

9.00 am – 10.30 am  Individual tutorials and work on the first writing assignment. You are welcome to bring existing work to discuss with the tutor.

10.30 am  Coffee

11.00 am – 12.30 pm  Individual tutorials and work on the first writing assignment

1.00 pm  Lunch

2.00 pm  Free

4.00 pm  Tea

4.30 pm – 6.00 pm  Tutorials and work on the first assignment

7.15 pm  Dinner

8.30 pm – 10.00 pm  Group reading with musical interludes

10.00 pm  Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Wednesday 9 November 2011

8.00 am  Breakfast

9.00 am – 10.30 am  Seminar on The Storm House by Tim Liardet

10.30 am  Coffee

11.00 am – 12.30 pm  Introduction to the work of Anne Carson, with extracts from Autobiography of Red, Men in the Off Hours, and poems from the London Review of Books
(photocopies supplied)

1.00 pm  Lunch
2.00 pm  Free
4.00 pm  Tea. Please have your work on the first assignment on your desks ready for photocopying by 4.00 pm
4.30 pm – 6.00 pm  Seminar on Anne Carson’s Nox
7.15 pm  Dinner
8.30 pm – 10.00 pm  Group Workshop on the first assignment
10.00 pm  Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Thursday 10 November 2011

8.00 am  Breakfast
9.00 am – 10.30 am  Tutorials and work on the second assignment
10.30 am  Coffee
11.00 am – 12.30 pm  Tutorials and work on the second assignment
1.00 pm  Lunch
2.00 pm  Free
4.00 pm  Tea
4.30 pm – 6.00 pm  Tutorials and work on the second assignment
7.15 pm  Dinner
8.30 pm – 10.00 pm  Seminar on Anne Cluysenaar’s Water to Breathe
10.00 pm  Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Friday 11 November 2011

8.00 am  Breakfast. Please have your work on the second assignment on your desks ready for photocopying by 8.30 am
9.00 am – 10.30 am  Group Workshop on the second assignment
10.30 am  Coffee
11.00 am – 12.30 pm  Group Workshop on the second assignment
1.00 pm  Lunch  The course will disperse after lunch
Course syllabus

Aims:

1. To give a close reading of Tim Liardet’s The Storm House, which has to confront similar material to Anne Carson’s Nox and is just as highly charged but more traditional in form;
2. To give a close reading of Anne Cluysenaar’s Water to Breathe, which has affinities with The Storm House and Nox in its recreation of the play of childhood memories but without the tragic overtones;
3. To discuss what is lost and what is gained by each of these different formal approaches;
4. To give students a chance to try the different shape of the poem on the page that Jorie Graham is using in Sea Change and to embark on making their own equivalents to Nox.

Content:
The course will focus on Jorie Graham and Anne Carson’s formal innovations but also consider what can be achieved by the more traditional approaches taken by Tim Liardet and Anne Cluysenaar. Anne Carson’s Nox is a cross between an art installation and a book and we will discuss the possibilities that are now arising as poets begin to work, not just with artists and musicians, as they have often done in the past, but with dancers and circus performers and what these more fluid collaborations reveal about the way the imagination works. How much can we achieve with words, spelling everything out in the way Tim Liardet does, and what can we gain from the momentary associations that occur as we read from the left page to the right in Nox, a reading that offers continual glimpses of the world’s unknowability, its chanciness and its multiplicity?

Presentation of the course:
Close reading and discussion of the set texts in the seminars.

Two writing assignments, both to be undertaken with the guidance of individual tutorials throughout the week, and the second to be seen as a rough draft for a longer, optional assignment, to be completed after the course ends, with email or postal guidance from the tutor, and presented to a future Masterclass.

Searching but sympathetic examination of the students’ work-in-progress in the group workshops.

Outcomes:
As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. give an initial response to the highly-charged work of Anne Carson and Tim Liardet and consider what is lost and what is gained by their very different formal approaches;
2. appreciate the different behaviour of Jorie Graham’s latest poems on the page and see for themselves what can be achieved by working with a central margin as well as a left-hand margin and setting long lines off against a short central line;
3. appreciate the fine judgement with which Anne Cluysenaar frames her childhood memories so that they have, in Jeremy Hooker’s phrase, “the feel of the very time and are momentary re-entries into it.”
### Reading and resources list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jorie Graham</td>
<td><em>Sea Change</em></td>
<td>Carcanet, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Liardet</td>
<td><em>The Storm House</em></td>
<td>Carcanet, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Carson</td>
<td><em>Nox</em></td>
<td>New Directions, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Cluysenaar</td>
<td><em>Water to Breathe</em></td>
<td>Flarestack, 2009</td>
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*Sea Change* and *The Storm House* can be obtained postfree and at a 10% discount direct from the Carcanet website: just put Carcanet Books into Google, click on the website and enter author and book title into the search box. You can also register for Carcanet’s weekly e-letter, which is always informative and carries no obligation to buy.

*Nox* can be obtained postfree with Free Super Saver Delivery from Amazon.co.uk

*Water to Breathe* can be obtained postfree by sending a cheque for £3.50 to Flarestack Publishing, 8 Abbot’s Way, Pilton, Somerset BA4 4BN

*Nox* was made as an elegy for Anne Carson’s brother and is built around Catullus’s elegy for his dead brother. She takes the Latin poem word by word, giving dictionary definitions on the left-hand page and material about her own brother on the right-hand page. As I said under the Course Content, it is worth reading from left page to right to get those glimpses of the world’s unknowability, its chanciness and its multiplicity. You will come on a full translation of the Latin poem in good time but it’s worth working through the unknowing first, dizzying though it may seem at times. I am enclosing a review of *Nox* that might be helpful as background, though I’m not always in agreement with it.

The other books are not demanding, word by word, and should be read straight through.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of September 2011*