Poetry Workshop, Writers in Florence 2023

Instructor: Mark Bibbins (mb6108@nyu.edu)

Location: Villa Ulivi, room TBA

Times: Mondays* and Thursdays 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

*May 29 is a holiday, we will let you know the time and day of the rescheduled class.

Attendance and Conduct in Class

You must attend all eight sessions (no absences or lateness), turn in poems on the dates assigned (expect an email from me with instructions closer to the start of the term), and participate in class discussions. It’s as important to listen as it is to speak, so the general rule will be that while your own poem is being discussed, you are not to respond to your peers’ comments, whether in agreement or disagreement, unless/until I give the go-ahead. Of course, if you have questions when we finish talking about your poem, you may ask them, time permitting.

With the exception of our first two meetings, you will always receive hard copies of your peers’ poems in advance. Please read them carefully and make legible notes on the copies, which you will return to their respective authors after each workshop.

Be sure to put your names at the tops of the pages of your own poems that you hand out, and sign the copies you return to each other, so everyone will know whose comments are whose.

I strongly recommend that you read your poems aloud at least once before you hand them in. It’s an important part of the editing process, and it will help build confidence if you are anxious about presenting your work.

“Formal” Assignments

During the term you must complete three (your choice) of five formal assignments:

- villanelle
- sestina
- poem written in syllabics
- ekphrastic poem
- persona poem

We will review examples of all of these in class. You are welcome to workshop them, or you may turn them in only to me if you prefer to workshop something else with the group. You may also send me revisions or request additional feedback on poems that have already been workshopped (email or hard copies are fine).
You may complete the above assignments in whatever order you choose. They are due on Mondays: June 5, 12, and 19. I will also suggest optional “prompts” to help you generate new poems.

Readings/Handouts

There is no textbook for the class, but I will provide you with handouts and links to poems/essays online. Please keep all handouts in a folder and bring them to class. We will not always have time to discuss them as a group, but please be prepared to do so.

Office Hours

I will be available to meet with you before or after our workshop most days, should you wish to discuss your work in particular or your experience in the program in general. Please email me in advance to schedule an appointment and we can arrange a place on campus to meet.