

## **Intro to Fixed-form Poetry Explication and Scansion**

Powerful poetry uses more than the connotations of language to evoke emotion; the meter, rhyme, structure, and sound of a well-crafted poem reinforce and multiply its meaning. This course starts with a basic introduction to the metrical scansion of poetry and teaches you to apply this skill to explicating fixed-form poems. While we'll focus primarily on the sonnet form and its evolution, we'll also examine the villanelle and the sestina--and the ways classical and contemporary poets both adhere to and depart from the confines of fixed forms to enhance the content of their poems. Poets may include Shakespeare (obvi), Drayton, Pope, Wordsworth, Keats, Yeats, Frost, McKay, Millay, Brooks, Bishop, Thomas, Hardy, Roethke, Lowell, Plath, Collins, Jarman, Patricia Smith, Meinke, Trethewey, Su, Paradez, Addonizio.

Please note that if you are already well versed in metrical scansion and formal poetics, this class will be too elementary for you! This instruction is intended for those who enjoy the rhythms of formal poetry but don't yet have a full understanding of how its physical construction can be deliberately crafted and its structure and form leveraged to enhance the poem's meaning.

Note also that this class will be offered in person at 1995 University Ave., Suite 365. The course will involve class participation to work through how to scan and identify the meter of a poem together. While participation isn't required, taking part in the interactive portion will help you get the full experience!

Week 1: Introduction to Formal Poetic Devices (Sound, Rhyme, Structure) and the Sonnet Form

Week 2: Introduction to Metrical Scansion

Week 3: Meter and the Sonnet Form: linking sound and sense

Week 4: Other fixed forms: Villanelles and Sestinas

Week 5: Advanced explication: formal masters at work

Week 6: Beyond Free Verse: Contemporary adaptations of classical poetic forms

Rather than providing a broad survey of poetry, this class will focus on close reading and explication of just a few poems a week to demonstrate the ways poets exploit the potential of poetic form to maximize their expression. All poems will be posted on the OLLI website—please print them out so you have a hard copy to write on in class!