

Orpheus and Company
Poems for Discussion and Debate
(and Fisticuffs?)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Part 1</u>	<u>Part 2</u>
1	“Persephone Leaving” (pp. 141 - 142)	“Orpheus and Eurydice in Spain” (pp. 7 - 9)
2	“Hector’s Return” (pp. 60 - 61)	“Archaic Penelope” (pp. 131 - 132)
3	“Teiresias” (pp. 172 - 173)	“Icarium Mare” (handout) “Maze and Monster” (pp. 218 - 222)
4	“Debarked” (pp. 193 - 194)	“The Nymph to Narcissus” (p. 229)
5	“Athena” (p. 244)	“First Song” (pp. 278 - 279)
6	“Cassandra” (p. 297) “Galatea” (p. 303)	“The Origin of the Constellation...” (pp. 315 - 316)

Ars Poetica

After [Amiri Baraka](#) and [Stefania Gomez](#)

Poems are bullshit unless they are broken
like a horse, like a dog kicked in the ribs,
Like your favorite toy that's missing an arm.

Love can make you feel used.
I want the poem that limps back to me.
Poems should hurt like love,
like ice water on your teeth
like a massage to smooth out a cramped muscle.

Give me the poem that's like leather.
Give me the poem that smells like gasoline.
I want a poem that is a warning,
a poem that makes me check to see
if I left the shotgun by the door,
a poem that's a runny nose, a sneeze, a poem
that's the moment the sky turns green.

— [Kenyatta Rogers](#)

Poetry

In the same way that the mindless diamond keeps
one spark of the planet's early fires
trapped forever in its net of ice,
it's not love's later heat that poetry holds,
but the atom of the love that drew it forth
from the silence: so if the bright coal of his love
begins to smoulder, the poet hears his voice
suddenly forced, like a bar-room singer's — boastful
with his own huge feeling, or drowned by violins;
but if it yields a steadier light, he knows
the pure verse, when it finally comes, will sound
like a mountain spring, anonymous and serene.

Beneath the blue oblivious sky, the water
sings of nothing, not your name, not mine.

—Don Paterson

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There will be much more about the analysis of poems in our first Keynote slides.

For now, though, let's begin by considering the act of poetry as a form of magic — poems as *spells*. When you read a particular poem, do you sense the witchcraft in the words? How or why not? What is your favorite stanza / line / phrase / word? Why?

Please bring answers to these questions to class: I will ask you to write them down before we begin our conversations.