

## Assignment Prompt: Close Reading Essay

Before you embark on this close reading essays, you will need to complete some pre-essay reading. I want you to read a book of poetry from cover to cover. You will use this book to write both drafts of your Close Reading Essay, so choose carefully.

You should select a book from the University Libraries' Kirby-Smith Poetry Collection. *You may choose any book you wish to write about, so long as it comes from this collection.* Be sure to check out the book you've selected from the Library, to ensure that it remains available to you for the entire writing period!

Please select **any one poem** from the book you checked out. If the book you selected contains a book-length poem, please choose a section of no more than three pages.

Your task in this essay is to analyze the poem you selected, reading it much in the same way we do with poems in class, directing attention to elements of the poem including speaker, audience, the line, word choice, syntax, figurative and literal language, and metaphor. In the essay, you should aim to offer your specific and personal reading of the poem, even as you recognize that your reading of it may differ from others'. Your goal is to try to put the poem you're writing about in the context of the book. This means you should answer questions like:

- Where in the book does this poem occur—early, late, or in the middle?
- What poems are around this poem, how does the author move from one to the next?

You should also address questions about the book as a whole, including:

- What holds this book of poems together as a book? Is it cohesive or various, or a mix?
- How does the book move from point to point—what do you make of its sequencing? Does the book have sections—if yes, how are they working? If no, why might it not?
- How is the experience of reading a book of poetry different than reading individual poems?

You are expected to organize your essay around the specific points you want to make, and to ensure that your essay flows logically from point to point. You are also expected to quote directly from the poem in support of the claims you make in your essay. Be sure to follow standard conventions for writing about poetry.

Your first draft should contain **two sources**: the book of poetry you are writing about, and a credible source whose claims you engage. Your second draft should add a second credible source whose claims you engage. We will discuss these sources in class. Please cite all your sources using the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of MLA format.

*At a glance:*

DUE: **Weds., February 19**

Revised Draft DUE: **Weds., March 25**

Portion of Final Grade: **10% per draft**

Brief description: 4-5 page essay, examining and analyzing a specific poem of your choice. The poem should come from a book in the Library's Kirby-Smith Poetry collection.

Essay length: **4-5 full pages**

Submit by uploading to Canvas.

Successful Close Reading Essays will demonstrate thoughtful and sustained engagement with the book you have chosen to write about, with the goal of understanding the book and its poems more fully.

### Grading Rubric

Category	Points	+	-
<b>Interpretation of Poem and Book</b> Your essay offers an original and well thought-out analysis that interprets the poem you have chosen to write about, and interpretatively places the poem in the context of its book.	25		
<b>Identification of Sources</b> Your essay clearly identifies the author and title of the book you are writing about. Other sources are identified and properly cited using MLA 8 <sup>th</sup> edition.	5		
<b>Attention to Poetic Techniques</b> Your essay's analysis focuses on poetic techniques we have discussed in class, identifying them by name and explaining how they operate in the poem or in the book as a whole.	25		
<b>Quoted Evidence from the Book + Sources</b> Your essay quotes from the book wherever necessary to support the points you are making. You also bring in the necessary external source(s) and engage their claims.	20		
<b>Fluidity of Organization</b> Your essay is organized around the points you are making, and moves logically from point to point.	15		
<b>Standards for Writing About Poetry</b> Your essay follows standard conventions for writing about poetry, including italicizing book titles, placing poem titles in quotation marks, referring to the author by their last name, and using slashes to represent line breaks.	10		