

Instructions for MARBL Essay

Format: 5-6 pages, double-spaced, plus one-paragraph process reflection
See pp. 8-9 of the syllabus for guidelines on formatting.

In this paper, you will focus on a single poem and the drafts of it held in Emory's Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL). Using the prompts for individual poems below, consider the significance of the poet's process of drafting and revising the poem. The questions for each poem below are meant to initiate rather than limit your thinking.

Once you've chosen a poem, revisit the questions for close reading found on the instructions for the Close Reading Essay (also available in PDF on Course Reserves) in order to think about how form interacts with content. This time, you should also aim to place the poem in the context of other work by the poet that you have read. Ask yourself: When was this poem written? Does it exemplify something about the rest of the poet's work or depart from it in any striking ways? I recommend talking with me about this and possible secondary resources. Of course, if you consult any secondary sources, be sure to document any ideas that are not your own.

Along the way, develop your own specific claim about the finished poem in relation to the draft(s) that you have seen. In your paper, illustrate this claim through close reading that features quotations and your own interpretation of these quotations.

Reminders:

- Give your essay a distinctive title.
- Insert page numbers for the essay.
- Follow MLA citation style. Cite poems by page number, not line number.
When citing MARBL drafts, use the following format in your works cited:
Heaney, Seamus. Drafts of "Strange Fruit." Seamus Heaney collection,
Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
- Include a Works Cited.
- In your conclusion, don't just restate your argument. Try to answer the "So what?" or "So why does this paper matter?" question.
- Carefully proofread for grammar, usage, spelling, and citation errors.

Timeline:

- Mon, Mar. 24: Meet for class in MARBL.
- Wed, Mar. 26: Come to class in MARBL prepared to choose a poem or poems that interests you. You can consult the relevant drafts during class time and then on your own. MARBL is open 9am-5:30pm Monday through Saturday, closed Sunday
- Consider making an appointment with me to discuss your work in progress and possible secondary resources.
- Consider making an appointment to discuss a draft with a tutor at the Writing Center. The purpose of an appointment is to help you plan how best to revise your work, not to proofread it for you. <http://writingcenter.emory.edu/>
- Mon, Mar. 31: **Bring to class a hard copy draft (5 pp.).** *Failing to bring to class a hard copy draft will lower your course grade by half of an unexcused absence.*
- Fri, Apr. 4: **Revised essay, including process reflection, due by 5pm in my box in the English Department office (Callaway N302).** In your one-paragraph process reflection, reflect your drafting and revision process, *including how you have made use my comments on your previous paper and any feedback you received on your draft(s).*

Prompts for Individual Poems:

Note that the order of drafts within a folder is not necessarily chronological; you will need to decipher clues within the drafts themselves about which was written first.

Lucille Clifton poems

- “the death of joanne c.” (Box 17, Folder 16). In what ways is Clifton’s decision to write this poem in the first person significant? What can you gather about her use of enjambment from the drafts?
- “incantation” (Box 17, Folder 23) and “chemotherapy” (Box 17, Folder 14). You are welcome to consider these poems—and their representation of medical care—together. For “incantation,” you might pay special attention to the change in title and line lengths, for “chemotherapy,” the changes in word choice.
- “note to myself” (Box 18, Folder 29). This folder includes an attempt by an editor to rewrite Clifton’s draft and an explanation of these suggested changes. How might you read Clifton’s response to these editorial suggestions in relation to what the poem itself argues?
- “report from the angel of eden” (Box 19, Folder 37). How do you read the ending of the poem in light of Clifton’s repeated revisions to it?

Carol Ann Duffy poems

Pay attention to the dates in the notebooks; sometimes later versions appear before earlier versions. Note, too, that early versions of a poem often appear before the title does, so look around in the notebook—and look in more than one folder, for some of these poems—to make sure you’ve located all the relevant drafts.

- “Recognition” (Box 1, Folder 1). How does it change your reading of the poem to see that the early drafts of this poem begin with what becomes a relatively late moment in the published poem?
- “Selling Manhattan” (Box 1, Folder 8). How does Duffy focus the project of this poem through her multiple drafts of it?
- “Warming Her Pearls” (Box 1, Folders 9 & 10). How does Duffy’s reworking of the final line reshape the emphasis or meaning of the entire poem?
- “Poet for Our Times” (initially called “Headlines”) (Box 1, Folders 9 & 10). How does rhyme play a role in the development of this poem, especially as Duffy revises many of the inset headlines?
- “Words, Wide Night” (Box 1, Folder 9). The drafts vary most at the beginning and the end of the poem. Why might this be, and how do you interpret the significance of the changes?
- “Moments of Grace” (Box 2, Folders 1 & 2). How does Duffy focus the project of this poem through her multiple drafts of it?
- “Prayer” (Box 2, Folder 3). How do the drafts reveal the significance of the sonnet form for this poem?

Seamus Heaney poems

- “Broagh” (Box 98, Folder 2). The photocopy of a notebook draft held by MARBL includes subtle but significant changes to the final lines of the poem. How does Heaney’s decision to revise these lines alter the emphasis or meaning of the poem?
- “Strange Fruit” (Box 1, Folder 10). Consider what Heaney gains, loses, or achieves by using the sonnet form for this poem. How do the changes to the form and content of the poem influence the meaning of the poem?
- “Fosterage” (Box 1, Folder 3). Michael MacLaverty, to whom “Fosterage” is dedicated, was Headmaster of St. Thomas’s Intermediate School, Belfast, when Heaney taught there. How does Heaney’s use of anecdotes change the tone and meaning of the poem over the course of the drafts? Note, too, that “Fosterage” is part of a longer sequence called *Singing School*, which you can find in Heaney’s *North or Opened Ground: Poems, 1966-1996*.

Michael Longley poems

- “The Butchers” (Box 22, Folder 21). Longley describes poems such as “The Butchers” as “after Homer,” meaning that they are not direct translations of Homer’s *The Odyssey*, but more akin to adaptations. Examine the drafts of “The Butchers,” the published poem, and this translation of Homer’s version: <http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/odyssey.22.xxii.html>. Where does Longley depart from Homer’s example? How do those departures change our understanding of the poem’s meaning and its response to violence?
- “Wreaths” (Box 21, Folder 20). In his introduction to *Causeway* (1971), Longley writes about the context of the Troubles: “Too many critics [...] fail to realize that the artist needs time in which to allow the raw material of experience to settle to an imaginative depth where he can transform it and possibly even suggest solutions to current and very urgent problems by reframing them according to the dictates of his particular discipline.” How do the changes Longley makes to “Wreaths,” in particular “The Green Grocer,” show the poet’s attempt to “transform” the “raw material” of the Grocer’s death?