

Spring 2017 - Professor Gregory / T Th 11:30-1 / AH 301 /  
*Women Writers: Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop & Gwendolyn Brooks*  
 —*Poetic Generation/s* — English 4378 / section 26507  
*Intersectionalities* — WGSS 3322 / section 26888



This class will explore the poetry, public personae and influence of these three major 20<sup>th</sup>-century American poets, from different generations. Moore (b. 1887) entered the New York poetry scene in 1918, and played a major role in defining Modernist poetics, along with Eliot, Pound, HD and Williams. Bishop (b. 1911) met Moore while in college, (a mutually influential, lifelong friendship, though Bishop lived abroad for years). Brooks (b. 1917), a Chicagoan, published her first book, also in dialog with Moore, in 1945, and like Moore had a long and varied public career. All three won Pulitzer prizes in the same decade: Brooks in 1950, Moore in 1951 and Bishop in 1956.

The class delves deeply into the work of all, exploring the dynamics of poetic influence, the evolving roles of intersectional identity markers including gender, race, sexuality and age in the writing and reception of poetry, and the history of 20<sup>th</sup>-century poetry.

Readings will include: poetry, correspondence and biographies, and critical and contextualizing secondary materials.

**ROSES ONLY**

You do not seem to realize that beauty is a liability rather than  
 an asset—that in view of the fact that spirit creates form we are justified in supposing  
 that you must have brains. For you, a symbol of the unit, stiff and sharp,  
 conscious of surpassing by dint of native superiority and liking for everything  
 self-dependent, anything an

ambitious civilization might produce: for you, unaided to attempt through sheer  
 reserve, to confute presumptions resulting from observation, is idle. You cannot make us  
 think you a delightful happen-so. But rose, if you are brilliant it  
 is not because your petals are the without-which-nothing of pre-eminence. You would, minus thorns,  
 look like a what-is-this, a mere

peculiarity. They are not proof against a worm, the elements, or mildew  
 but what about the predatory hand? What is brilliance without co-ordination? Guarding the  
 infinitesimal pieces of your mind, compelling audience to  
 the remark that it is better to be forgotten than to be remembered too violently,  
 your thorns are the best part of you.

—Marianne Moore