Creative Writing Specialty Comprehensive Exam Reading List for Poets

We suggest students buy all full novels or poetry collections on the list as well as *Selected Poems of Anne Sexton* (Eds. Diane Wood Middlebrook and Diana Hume George), *Claims for Poetry* (Donald Hall, Ed.), Gardner’s *The Art of Fiction*, and Flannery O’Connor *Mystery and Manners*.

Remaining poems can be found in anthologies like *Contemporary American Poetry* (Ed. A. Poulin, Jr.) or *The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Poetry*. The department has copies of poems and short stories that are not available from reputable websites on file in the English department and some books on reserve in the Axe.

A Deep Look at Three Poets: Sexton, Clifton, and Lee

Anne Sexton from *Selected Poems of Anne Sexton* (in order of appearance in the collection)

Her Kind
Ringing the Bells
Lullaby
The Truth the Dead Know
To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph
The Starry Night,
Old Dwarf Heart
The Operation
With Mercy for the Greedy
For Eleanor Boylan Talking with God
And One for My Dame
Flee on Your Donkey
Somewhere in Africa
Consorting with Angels
Walking in Paris
Menstruation at Forty
The Breast
In Celebration of My Uterus
For My Lover, Returning to His Wife
Just Once
You All Know the Story of the Other Woman
The Ballad of the Lonely Masturbator
Song for a Lady
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
Rapunzel
Dreaming the Breasts
The Silence
*From* Death of the Fathers [parts 1-4]
Angels of the Love Affair
The Fury of Beautiful Bones
The Fury of Guitars and Sopranos
The Fury of Cooks
The Fury of Cocks
The Fury of Sunsets

Lucile Clifton *Blessing the Boats*

David Lee *The Porcine Canticles*

**A Baker’s Dozen of Poets Representing a Wide Variety of Craft Choices and Styles**

**Seven Poems by Robert Frost**
- After Apple-Picking
- Birches
- Design”
- Directive
- Home Burial
- “Out, Out—”
- The Witch of Coös

**Twelve Poems by William Carlos Williams**
- A Sort of a Song
- Danse Russe
- Landscape with the Fall of Icarus
- Queen Anne’s Lace
- Portrait of a Lady
- Spring and All
- The Dance [“In Breughel’s great picture”]
- The Great Figure
- The Sparrow
- The Widow’s Lament in Springtime
- To a Poor Old Woman
- To Elsie

**Ten Poems by Theodore Roethke**
- Cuttings
- Cuttings” (later)
- Elegy for Jane
- Frau Bauman, Frau Schmidt, and Frau Schwartze
- I Knew a Woman
- Journey to the Interior
- My Papa’s Waltz
- Orchids
- Root Cellar
- The Far Field
Eight Poems by Robinson Jeffers
Calm and Full the Ocean
Credo
Carmel Point
Fawn’s Foster-Mother
Hands
Hurt Hawks
Shine, Perishing Republic
The Purse Seine

Eleven Poems by Robert Hayden
A Plague of Starlings
Bone-Flower Elegy
For a Young Artist
Homage to the Empress of the Blues
Middle Passage
Monet’s “Waterlilies”
Night, Death, Mississippi
O Daedalus, Fly Away Home
The Ballad of Sue Ellen Westerfield
The Tattooed Man
Those Winter Sundays

Seven Poems by A.R. Ammons
Cascadilla Falls
Catalyst
Corsons Inlet
Mechanism
Motion
Garbage [Sections 1-5]
The City Limits

Three Poems by Allen Ginsberg
America
A Supermarket in California
Howl

Eleven Poems by Alberto Ríos
Across this Bridge of Dreams
A Man Then Suddenly Stops Moving
A Photograph from the Revolution: Guayamas to Nogales
Day of the Refugios
Dressing for Dinner
Indentations in the Sugar
Some Extensions on the Sovereignty of Science
Teodoro Luna’s Two Kisses
The Blurred Woman in the Photograph
The Purpose of Altar Boys
Writing from Memory

Five Poems by Rita Dove
After *Reading Mickey in the Night Kitchen* for the Third Time Before Bed
Agosta the Winged Man and Rasha the Black Dove
Grape Sherbet
Parsley
Weathering Out

Six Poems by Jane Kenyon
Happiness
Having it Out with Melancholy
Let Evening Come
Otherwise
Not Writing
The Suitor

Six Poems by Naomi Shihab Nye
The Travelling Onion
Making a Fist
The World in Translation
Arabic
Famous
Arabic Coffee

Nine Poems by Billy Collins
Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House
A Portrait of the Reader with a Bowl of Cereal
Candle Hat
Hell
Man in Space
Memento Mori
Pie Man
Questions about Angels
I Chop Some Parsley While Listening to Art Blakey's Version of “Three Blind Mice”

Sixteen poems by Carol Frost
Apple Rind
Blue Crab
Chimera
Egret
Fury
Icarus in Winter
Influenza
Eating the Whole
Ode to the Horseshoe Crab
Red Deer
Sexual Jealousy
The Embroidery
The Fairy Tale
The Haircut
The Winter without Snow
To Kill a Deer

The Poet’s Five Fiction Selections: 7 Authors

Three Stories by Eudora Welty
Lily Daw and the Ladies
Where Is the Voice Coming From
Why I Live at the P.O.

Three Stories by Flannery O'Connor
A Good Man is Hard to Find
Everything That Rises Must Converge
Good Country People

Marilynne Robinson’s *Housekeeping*

Three Stories by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings
Blacamán the Good, Vendor of Miracles
The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World

Three Stories by Lydia Davis
If, at the Wedding
Molly, Female Cat
The Two Davises and the Rug

Two Stories by ZZ Packer
Brownies
Drinking Coffee Elsewhere

Two Stories by Grace Paley
A Conversation with My Father
Wants

Poetry and Fiction Theory

Henry James “The Art of Fiction”
Ezra Pound “A Retrospect” & “Affirmations”

Robert Frost “The Figure a Poem Makes”


John Gardner “The Preface” and “Part One” of *The Art of Fiction*

Alicia Ostriker “The Nerves of a Midwife: Contemporary American Women’s Poetry”

Adrienne Rich “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision”

Wayne Booth “Control and Distance in Jane Austen’s *Emma*”

A.R. Ammons “A Poem Is a Walk”

Donald Hall “Goatfoot, Milktongue, Twinbird: The Psychic Origins of Poetic Form”

Robert Bly “What the Image Can Do”

W.D. Snodgrass “Tact and the Poet’s Force”

Charles Baxter “On Defamiliarization” & “Counterpointed Characterization”

Antonya Nelson “Short Story: A Process of Revision”

Francine Prose “Learning from Chekhov”
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for Fiction Writers

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The Fiction Writer’s 5 Poetry Selections: 7 Authors

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“Out, Out—”
The Witch of Coös

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Night, Death, Mississippi
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The Operation
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For Eleanor Boylan Talking with God
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Flee on Your Donkey
Somewhere in Africa
Consorting with Angels
Walking in Paris
Menstruation at Forty
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For My Lover, Returning to His Wife
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A Supermarket in California
Howl

Lucile Clifton Blessing the Boats
David Lee *The Porcine Canticles*

A Baker’s Dozen plus one of Fiction Writers Representing a Wide Variety of Craft Choices and Styles

Three Stories by Anton Chekhov
- Gusev
- The Lady with the Pet Dog
- The Two Volodyas

Two Stories by Ernest Hemingway
- A Clean Well-Lighted Place
- Hills Like White Elephants

Three Stories by Katherine Anne Porter
- Flowering Judas
- The Grave
- The Jilting of Granny Weatherall

Three Stories by Eudora Welty
- Lily Daw and the Ladies
- Where Is the Voice Coming From
- Why I Live at the P.O.

Three Stories by Flannery O'Connor
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- Everything That Rises Must Converge
- Good Country People

Three Stories by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings
- Blacamán the Good, Vendor of Miracles
- The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World

Two Stories by Grace Paley
- A Conversation with My Father
- Wants

Two Stories by Tobias Wolff
- Bullet in the Brain
- Hunters in the Snow

Three Stories by Alice Munro
- Boys and Girls
- Runaway
Turkey Season

**Three Stories by Raymond Carver**
- A Small Good Thing
- Cathedral
- What We Talk About When We Talk About Love

**Three Stories by George Saunders**
- CivilWar Land in Bad Decline
- Sea Oak
- Semplica Girl Diaries

**Two Stories by Jhumpa Lahiri**
- Interpreter of Maladies
- Temporary Matter

**Two Stories by ZZ Packer**
- Brownies
- Drinking Coffee Elsewhere

**Three Stories by Lydia Davis**
- If, at the Wedding
- Molly, Female Cat
- The Two Davises and the Rug

**A Deep Look at Four Writers:*** Faulkner, Gay, Machado, and Robinson

**William Faulkner** *As I Lay Dying*

**William Gay** *Twilight*

**Carmen Maria Machado** *Her Body and Other Parties*

**Marilynne Robinson** *Housekeeping*

**Poetry and Fiction Theory**

**Henry James** “The Art of Fiction”

**Ezra Pound** “A Retrospect” & “Affirmations”

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