

Three American Poets: Evans, Bishop, Oliver

In this session we'll study work by three distinguished American poets: Abbie Huston Evans (1881-1983), Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979), and Mary Oliver (1935-2014). Representing overlapping generations, the trio spans the twentieth century. We'll consider their formal choices and subject matter, examining recurrent topics and themes, e.g., nature, passion, art. Conflict with societal expectations provides a thematic undercurrent in a number of poems. Readings are listed by date but represent tentative planning, as our discussions may take us through the material at a different pace from that indicated.

Readings:

- 4/6/22 Evans: "Primary"; "The Sycamore in Winter"; "Wing-Spread"
- 4/13/22 Evans: "The Burning Hill"; "Pegmatite"; "Sonnet"
- 4/20/22 Evans: "The Mineral Collection"; "Out of the Wave"
- 4/27/22 Bishop: "The Map"; "Questions of Travel"
- 5/4/22 Bishop: "Brazil, January 1, 1502"; "In the Waiting Room"
- 5/11/22 Bishop: "Seascape"; "12 O'Clock News"
Oliver: "Mussels"
- 5/18/22 Oliver: "Looking for Snakes"; "Little Owl Who Lives in the Orchard"
- 5/25/22 Oliver: "Death at a Great Distance"; "Blossom"