

Pittsburg State University

## Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

---

Programs

English and Modern Languages

---

9-10-2020

### Witcheries of Living: Maya Angelou and Mary Oliver (video and transcript)

Joshua Davis

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/eml\\_programs](https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/eml_programs)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Davis, Joshua, "Witcheries of Living: Maya Angelou and Mary Oliver (video and transcript)" (2020).  
*Programs*. 1.

[https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/eml\\_programs/1](https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/eml_programs/1)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English and Modern Languages at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Programs by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@pittstate.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@pittstate.edu).

Laura Lee Washburn: Okay. So, Josh, are you okay with having this recorded and archived and for sharing with the public.

Mr. Davis: I am indeed. Yes, ma'am.

Laura Lee Washburn: Okay thank you and everyone else knows that they have the ability to turn off their, um, their camera toward themselves if they want to. Hello, Josh enjoy seeing our lovely faces.

Mr. Davis: Yes, please.

Laura Lee Washburn: If you're here, you've certainly read

Laura Lee Washburn: Joshua's biography. Note that came with the zoom link. And so I will say a lot. Um, he as Shannon said when she shared the part we wrote up. He's a really cool guy. If you don't already know that, um,

Laura Lee Washburn: I invited him to speak today because of not only his depth of knowledge, but his great enthusiasm for poetry and for all of the craft elements of poetry and

Laura Lee Washburn: He has multiple degrees, including one from Pitt state and went on to become a Grisham fellow at the University of Mississippi and is now pursuing the PhD. I don't want to say the wrong place. I didn't write it down.

Mr. Davis: Well, Ohio University.

Mr. Davis: But my assistant ship is ended and I passed my exams and I may never defended my dissertation will see one day.

Laura Lee Washburn: That you recorded that

Mr. Davis: I am standing

Mr. Davis: Understand

Laura Lee Washburn: So I'm okay. I'm just gonna turn it over to you and I'm gonna let everybody, let's see, I would like to mute all

Laura Lee Washburn: Um,

Laura Lee Washburn: And then I'm gonna unmute Josh

Laura Lee Washburn: And mute myself and word

Mr. Davis: Oh, Laura. Are you still there.

Mr. Davis: Okay, I just wanted to make sure that the audio didn't cut out. You're just muted yourself. Yes.

Mr. Davis: Okay. All right, everybody, so here's what's going to happen. I'm going to read some prepared remarks.

Mr. Davis: On Mary Oliver and on my Angelou, but I'm also going to stop periodically, just to make sure that you're still with me.

Mr. Davis: And if you've got questions, concerns, if you need to hear a bit of a stands on were some lines again, rather than do screen sharing. I'd rather repeat myself, especially since I'm going to be focusing so much on sound.

Mr. Davis: And on rhythm, it seems to me we can't hear these lines, too many times.

Mr. Davis: Okay. And I will tell you that I've made a trip from my classroom to a room that's attached to the front office. And so, it occurs to me that now, but I've arrived, I don't have my physical books with me.

Mr. Davis: I have my essay, but I don't have my physical books. So if it turns out there's some fumbling it's because I'm frantically trying to get ahold of a poem in some other way.

Mr. Davis: But I know I've got a friendly audience. And I want to say that I'm incredibly grateful to be here and I'm honored to have been asked.

Mr. Davis: And I also want to say that although what Laura has said is true about my having many degrees. I'm especially proud of my degree from Pitt state.

Mr. Davis: And I feel really nostalgic in the best way about my time there and about what I learned when I was a student at Pitt state. And I also want to say that I certainly could not have gone on to do to MFA is at one time.

Mr. Davis: Without the people I met and the things I learned in my two years at Pitt state. So to those of you who are students. I want to say that you really are in a wonderful place maybe even a better place. Then you realize that this particular

Mr. Davis: Okay.

Mr. Davis: So my talk for today is entitled Witcher ease of living Maya Angelou, and Mary Oliver one

Mr. Davis: But are they good poets.

Mr. Davis: No ambitious writer of poetry would dispute that poets, learn from other poets omnivorous reading produces vibrant writing

Mr. Davis: But the forces of fashion taste and literary celebrity shape which poets, we read for which reasons. Some poets, we read because we crave completeness and belonging

Mr. Davis: Other poets, we read often having discovered them by accident because they teach us how to write the poems, we most urgently need to write the poems are diminishing world. Most aggravated Lee needs to read

Mr. Davis: We could engineer these poems, we believe, if only we can trace the necessary patterns of thought.

Mr. Davis: If only we could find amble models for the appropriate techniques even Elizabeth Bishop who doubted whether she or anybody else could teach a person to write poetry believed she could quote train the poets, I

Mr. Davis: What I wonder, are the poets corollaries to the painters color theory or exercises with stapling and hatching or experiments with line and with perspective.

Mr. Davis: In the same way, the painter observes disparate but commends or its strengths in a color field painting and in an academic portrait all of whose vitality are invaluable to her art.

Mr. Davis: The poet gleans as much from the so called popular poet, as she does from the darling of the day in the slickest literary journals.

Mr. Davis: Obviously, no one has to choose between extremes, rather than embrace a false dichotomy, we ought to read like magpies snatching as many shining bits as we can.

Mr. Davis: ignored by academic literary critics scoffed at or patronized by many working poets Maya Angelou, and Mary Oliver offer us much that glimmers if we supply enough tenacity of vision, we must chase the light as it shaves across their lines like a stone skipping across the lakes cold face.

Mr. Davis: About your familiarity with these poets, I presume, nothing Maya Angelou live from 1928 to 2014

Mr. Davis: She was born in St. Louis. As a child, she lived in stamps Arkansas, not quite, seven hours from Pittsburgh, Kansas.

Mr. Davis: She went to high school in San Francisco. She's saying in nightclubs in Hawaii in the 1950s, Angela joined the Harlem Writers Guild where she collaborated with James Baldwin, whom she had first met in Paris, while she was touring in Porgy and Bess.

Mr. Davis: She served on two presidential committees under Ford and Carter, President Clinton awarded her the National Medal of Freedom in her lifetime. She published 36 books and earns no fewer than 50 honorary degrees.

Mr. Davis: No one would assert that hers is a life or a career that has gone on to celebrate yet her work as a civil rights activist as a public intellectual and as a memoirist overshadow her prowess as a poet and one of my goals this afternoon is to show that prowess to fullest advantage.

Mr. Davis: Mary Oliver seven years younger than Maya Angelou live from 1935 to 2019 like Angelou all have earned no college degree during her lifetime, although she attended both Vassar and Ohio State like Angelou Oliver.

Mr. Davis: received an honorary degrees, including honorary doctorates from Dartmouth tufts and Marquette University.

Mr. Davis: Just as James Baldwin lauded Maya Angelou as, quote, black bitter and beautiful and his quote one who speaks of our survival.

Mr. Davis: The poet and scholar Alicia ostreicher has called Mary Oliver a visionary in the tradition of Ralph Waldo Emerson, however honorary degrees.

Mr. Davis: A Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award and unequivocal praise from a poet. Like, oh striker appear not to have altered the uncomfortable circumstance in which

Mr. Davis: All of her has received accolades, but not the kind of critical scrutiny.

Mr. Davis: That once very earnestly to understand how a poet builds her pawns how out of a limitless ever more widely fanning set of choices she selects one image, rather than another. This sentence shape and not that one. This line break over every other alternative

Mr. Davis: Therefore I choose to pair Angelou and host Riker because both poets have enjoyed enviable reputations among readers, including readers who claim not to understand poetry or even to like poetry, very much.

Mr. Davis: And both poets deserve to be to be appreciated with the same zeal and exactitude with which one might appraise poets such as jury Graham Harriet Mullen, or EV Shockley

Mr. Davis: All of whom we ought to read, but who no one could claim should inspire shame or self consciousness because Graham Mullen and Shockley more fully embrace postmodern poetics

Mr. Davis: And when they use the term poetics I refer to a poet value system her skills, her priorities are obsessions every sort of whether she knows how to work inside the barely contain storm. We call upon

Mr. Davis: Unlike George Graham Harriet Mullen and EV Shockley Angelou and all of her are according to the snobby so among the literati glitterati poets for the masses producers of comforting affirmative fair practitioners of an art, art self evident charming grandma.

Mr. Davis: sexism and racism explain much of this nasty resistance, but these prejudices often hide beneath a suspicion toward any writing poetry, fiction drama or nonfiction that surrenders itself to a reader with merciful clarity.

Mr. Davis: It's more acceptable to complain. I just don't think there's much going on there than it is to admit. Well, the work of gay women and black women isn't

Mr. Davis: I call this clarity merciful, precisely because these poets refuse to manipulate a reader for the sake of playing a purely intellectual game.

Mr. Davis: Or to waste a readers TIME OR TO PRETEND THAT SMUG literary experiments conducted for their own sake.

Mr. Davis: are inherently radical original or liberating because they are experiments as experimentation. However, right, however haphazard we're a virtue in and of itself.

Mr. Davis: The kind of simplicity we discern in Angelou, and in all of her alludes all but the most persistent Poets. Poets who orchestrate a poem elements without signs of strain.

Mr. Davis: Their shared commitment to simplicity regarded as an insult or as a curse in some writerly circles might tempt us into overlooking the powers these poets possess

Mr. Davis: Okay, I want to take a break and look at your faces and see if you're with me still with me doing okay. Yeah. All right. I'm going to take a sip. Because my mouth is super dry and then I'll move forward.

Mr. Davis: To whispering together.

Mr. Davis: When we read, Angelou and all of her we encounter Supremes technicians who attend to sound to image and to form in pursuit of credibility and here I arrived at the molten core toward which I'm driving today.

Mr. Davis: When a poet alloys sound image and form when she treats syntax as endlessly malleable eager to be melted down shaped and reshaped

Mr. Davis: When she stretches the sentence taught against the line and the line taught against the stanza she achieves poetic authority and poetic authority always begins with

Mr. Davis: Every voice lungs for a listener, no matter what tones. They strike the voices the speakers we encounter in a poem seek to spell bind us from the first line to the last

Mr. Davis: Regardless of its form its genre or its history, a poem embodies a speaker or speakers. So we receive sound image and form through that speaker, which we must acknowledge as invented

Mr. Davis: In a Zorro man Angelo begins here in the wound room silk purple grapes flash a light as subtle as your hands before love me.

Mr. Davis: Conventional workshop wisdom dictates that one word lines are hard to get away with.

Mr. Davis: But when she opens the poem with here and immediately breaks the line and you lose speaker shows no weekly workshop trepidation.

Mr. Davis: The second line illustrates the power of internal rhyme. If Angelou had separated wound and room and had placed them at the end of rhyming lines, they might sound too familiar too quick to tweet to pack.

Mr. Davis: But the EU sound in wound and room fits so beautifully after the long he in here that we welcome the repetition inside a single line.

Mr. Davis: The phrase purple grapes in the second line proves that Angelou wield consonants, just as confidently as she does acids.

Mr. Davis: In the third line. The L sounds in Flash and light knit the pawns Sonic skeleton more tightly together.

Mr. Davis: So to in the fourth line. Do your and before. Again, just like with wound room if you're and before we're enshrines they would attract much more skepticism.

Mr. Davis: Arranged as they are, however, these words and phrases unfold thanks to their sound as a series of inevitability.

Mr. Davis: We realize sound in upon is performing miraculously when we recall the pawn as a piano riff overheard from another room and we had the instinct to yell to the person down the hall. Hey, turn that up. I want to hear that again.

Mr. Davis: The second stanza of Zorro man seems on a first reading to treat the first stanza like a stencil to be turned at a slight angle.

Mr. Davis: Here in the covered lens I catch a clitoral image of your general inhabitation long and like a late Dawn winter now here has launched two senses.

Mr. Davis: Were in the first stanza the speaker encloses us in that wound room, the speaker now turns toward the cover lens.

Mr. Davis: A womb like space purple drapes a covered lens. These images cohere to create an atmosphere of sensuous and sensual privacy.

Mr. Davis: And almost stereotypically feminine seclusion amplified by the quote clitoral image in the next line.

Mr. Davis: After we confront and admired the sexual frankness of electoral we might ask, does the adjective to know color, shape intensity and answer unfurls in the stands. His last two lines long. And like

Mr. Davis: Late Dawn in winter. If we were line editing a draft of this poem, we might know that long. And like a lacking a noun or a verb might beg to be revisited

Mr. Davis: But if I were bickering and. NET workshop I would insist that sound and music the consonants of the L sounds and lens inquisitorial in long like and late

Mr. Davis: Make it all too tempting to glide like Robert flop Robert Frost snowflake riding on its own melting

Mr. Davis: Into the next stanza without quibbling about whether the second to last line has the kind of half we might otherwise demand.

Mr. Davis: Just like rhythm in line sound justifies itself. And although the music of vowels and consonants is by no means you need to poem to poetry poets like Angelou exploit music to its most glorious attentional

Mr. Davis: When she drafted the final stanza of Zorro man, which opens here this clean mirror traps me unwilling Angelou felt. I suspect the prickle at the edge of the poet's hearing

Mr. Davis: That comes of having folded and unfolded a pattern and of knowing at a gut level that what the pattern. Most needs is a flaw a tear, even the smallest mark of the switchblade



Mr. Davis: With the arrival of the clean mirror the eroticism. The wrapped up fantasy. The room. The purple drapes the cupboard lens. The late Dawn dissipates.

Mr. Davis: Our speaker is caught unwilling recalling a gone time when I was love. And you were booted and brave and trembling for me.

Mr. Davis: The end and gone and the M in time sound as if they belong. This close to one another. And let's listen one more time to the beast sounds in booted brave and trembling.

Mr. Davis: At the end of the poem The sounds push and propel after all we classify B and P as close as an explosive and I know not only the loss of the lover, but the loss of that bright assertive echo in the ear.

Mr. Davis: Okay, take a break. Take a sip.

Mr. Davis: Still with me, everybody.

Mr. Davis: All right, all right, I'm going to scroll through and your faces. I'm going to try to smile and say hello. Hello, everybody. Thank you so much for being here. Okay.

Mr. Davis: Three. Have you finally figured out what beauty is for. And have you changed your life.

Mr. Davis: Indulge me please, as I emphasize a distinction, on the one hand, Angelou and all of her provide sanctuary from the distortions of social media hot takes and fake news.

Mr. Davis: They tell us truth. What other poets have turned inner and outer news and serve as antidotes to the tidy fictions designed to keep us working and buying and selling and working and buy and sell the fictions designed to keep us listless compliant and always consuming

Mr. Davis: On the other hand, if we fail to recognize their speakers as well painted tight fitting masks we shorten the wingspans of their towns.

Mr. Davis: Both poets create the illusion that their speakers and their everyday selves overlap and that illusion succeeds so completely that we believe we are listening to the voices of the poets themselves.

Mr. Davis: unfiltered by the poet search for the well pitched phrase on tempered by the mess of revision.

Mr. Davis: Mary Oliver's the uses of sorrow consists of depending upon how we count four or five short lines going to eliminate

Mr. Davis: We encounter the title and then an aside in parentheses, and then the four lines that comprise the body of the poem, I will read the poem in its entirety, because I want to draw minute attention to the impact of the parents articles aside.

Mr. Davis: The uses of sorrow and then in parentheses, we get in my sleep I dreamed this pump and now here's the body of upon someone I loved ones gave me a box full of darkness.

Mr. Davis: It took me years to understand that this was a gift. The aside in my sleep I dreamed this poem lens. The poem

Mr. Davis: A trustworthy aura. But make no mistake, whether or not all over did in fact dream in this poem The aside counts as a poetic move

Mr. Davis: As part of the fantasma Gloria of the text. The body of the poem gives us a highly compressed narrative.

Mr. Davis: inflicted by a conspicuous lack of detail someone I loved rather than the beloved's identity a box that remains on described and a handful

Mr. Davis: Of unspecified excuse me, and an unspecified handful of years the poems unsettling on beyond depends upon whether or not we deem this speaker reliable without our trust without our belief. The poem loses its weird healing.

Mr. Davis: The speaker in the uses of sorrow, maybe more circumspect than many of the speakers in all of his poems, but a desire to craft a confidential rapport between speaker and reader recurs most memorably in wild geese one of Oliver's most famous poems. Now I'll read wild case.

Mr. Davis: You do not have to be good. You do not have to walk on your knees for 100 miles through the desert repenting.

Mr. Davis: You only have to let the soft animal of your body love one it loves. Tell me about despair yours and I will tell you mine.

Mr. Davis: Meanwhile, the world goes on. Meanwhile, the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain are moving across the landscape over the prairies and the deep trees.

Mr. Davis: The mountains and the rivers. Meanwhile, the wild geese high in the clean blue air are heading home again.

Mr. Davis: Whoever you are, no matter how lonely. The world offers itself to your imagination calls to you like the wild geese harsh and exciting over and over, announcing your place in the family of things.

Mr. Davis: You did not have to be good, declares the speaker and the poems first line and we believe her we linger for the space of that first line relieved of a lifelong burden, we cannot usually bear to notice.

Mr. Davis: In the wake of this release a luxury and permission follows. We continue to the second line of the poem out of a desire to know what alternative success if I don't have to be good. What do I have to be

Mr. Davis: Leaving aside HAVE TO WHAT CAN I BE WHAT MIGHT I BE perhaps I don't have to be any one thing at all. And if I don't have to be any one thing. What possibilities appear

Mr. Davis: What else might be not need to be or need to do or need to say

Mr. Davis: The speaker elaborates. You do not have to walk on your knees for 100 miles through the desert repenting. And in these lines.

Mr. Davis: We learn that not only may we relinquish the weight of goodness. We do not need to seek a biblical forgiveness Oliver's speaker build suspense opening the poem by way of negation by emphasizing what is not the speaker amplifies our desire to learn what indeed, we must do.

Mr. Davis: If the requirements that have shaped so many human lives the drive to do good search for forgiveness fall away the speaker must catalog, what remains

Mr. Davis: I can imagine an earlier draft of the poem that begins with the next two lines you only have to let the soft animal of your body.

Mr. Davis: Love what it loves but as much as that metaphor deserves praise some of its power comes from the speaker having spent two lines wending her way toward this reward.

Mr. Davis: Here we find a strategy we can imitate. Sometimes we enhance the picture when we concentrate on the negative space, the space is defined by the gaps between the feathers. The space between the arc of the wing and the edge of the page.

Mr. Davis: All of our speaker moves into the imperative and delivers a command a command which after the first four lines. We are eager to obey. Tell me about despair yours and I will tell you mine.

Mr. Davis: This line would be, in my view, infinitely less marvelous it read. Tell me about your despair, and I will tell you about mine or more laconically. Tell me about despair.

Mr. Davis: In the lines as written all over creates a quiet surprise a ripple in the surface of the syntax with tell me about despair yours and I will tell you mind.

Mr. Davis: This unintrusive departure from the relentless, subject, verb, object syntax, indeed, anything that frees us from the tyrannical repetitiveness of Jane kick the ball varies the texture of the line and complicates the poem.

Mr. Davis: In the next several lines Oliver illustrates how a Napper on a repeated element at the front of the line enables a poet to balance unassuming ordinary lines with thickly polished lines.

Mr. Davis: Each time meanwhile launches align the word accrues wait out of context, the world goes on with sound conversational and trite.

Mr. Davis: But after the invitation to exchange despairs with the Speaker, the reader received these words as an expression of surrender the line could say the world is in different

Mr. Davis: But all of our speaker coaxes coaxes us toward a mindful acceptance of our relative unimportance our humble position and what the speaker will later call the family of things, just as quote the world goes on so to do the sun and the clear pebbles of rain roll over the landscapes.

Mr. Davis: At first sun and clear pebbles appear to be bright emblematic blessedly uncomplicated images. But as soon as we arrive at the preposition or phrase of rain we realized we are watching a metaphor.

Mr. Davis: In flight so often in contemporary poetry, a metaphor will ask us to perceive nature in human terms or to perceive the human and animal terms.

Mr. Davis: But when she asks us to contemplate one natural object in terms of another natural object.

Mr. Davis: Mary Oliver joins Marianne more who in her poem to fish describes crow blue mussel shells and Elizabeth Bishop, who in her own poem entitled the fish reimagines the fishes pink swim bladder as, quote, a big peony

Mr. Davis: metaphors and similes like these place conventionally lovely animals, plants and phenomena alongside more humble harsher less expected natural images.

Mr. Davis: And may also argue in a way we sense even if we can't always articulate it for the interconnectedness of the human and non human realms.

Mr. Davis: Such metaphors Laura us to feel the degree to which we are implicated. And what we refer to as nature.

Mr. Davis: If we can observe how pedal pebbles, excuse me, pebbles and rain resemble one another. If we can spot the blue, black shimmer of a Crow's wing in the lacquered gleam of the Muscle Shoals,

Mr. Davis: If we can see the shape of a p AMP. A when we look at officious swim bladder, we might find it harder to buy into the damaging falsehoods of our separateness and our superiority.

Mr. Davis: The speaker watches the rain cascade over the prairies and the deep trees, the mountains and the river. Meanwhile, the wild geese high in the clear and indiscriminate clean blue air are heading home again.

Mr. Davis: These lines illustrate the saturation of meaning that occurs when we hear. Meanwhile, for the third time, the jump cuts simultaneity that links world sun pebbles rain landscapes prairies trees mountains, rivers and geese argues being by being image by image for homeless.

Mr. Davis: In the final five lines all of our speaker adopts a meditative serenity worthy of Walt Whitman.

Mr. Davis: We witness poetry as communion and as consolation. Whoever you are, no matter how lonely.

Mr. Davis: The world offers itself to your imagination calls to you like the wild geese harsh and exciting over and over, announcing your place in the family of things.

Mr. Davis: Not unlike the syntactic flicker flicker inherent in tell me about despair yours and I will tell you mine, we

Mr. Davis: See another qualifier when the speaker follows whoever you are, with no matter how long consider how damping, the line would be if all of her head settled on, no matter how long were you

Mr. Davis: In the final arrangements, all of our speaker embraces us as part of the family of things by reaching toward the reader carefully drawing incrementally nearer, allowing rather than forcing us to respond to the call of the geese and to the corresponding call of the world.

Mr. Davis: Okay, that was a big chunk. So I just want to check in and make sure we're okay we're doing okay.

Mr. Davis: Sandy. Yes. All right. All right. Okay. Thank you for that.

Mr. Davis: Whereas all of her speaker seduces us by alleviating the pressure to be virtuous, the speaker in Maya Angelou conceit.

Mr. Davis: Establishes disarming intimacy with commands cloaked as sultry requests.

Mr. Davis: Give me your hand make room for me to lead and follow you beyond this rage of poetry.

Mr. Davis: We cannot refuse we long for contact with a speaker this Frank this open this close

Mr. Davis: We want to lead and to follow. We long to know what lies beyond this range of poetry. We know the pronoun you sitting isolated on its own line rather than think how does she get away with that one word line.

Mr. Davis: WE THINK I WANT TO BE THIS YOU THIS beloved. Likewise if we read these lines, a second time we admire the daring of the one line first stanza. Give me your hand.

Mr. Davis: But any enthusiasm for technical accomplishments remains subservient to are yielding to this voice which proceeds let others have the privacy of touching words and love of loss of love.

Mr. Davis: Of all the verbs. ANGELO might select let shines with the potential to come off as casual and as prayerful at the same time.

Mr. Davis: One might say let as if mimicking Marie Antoinette infamously dismissive. Let them eat cake or one might say let as invoking the same forces Denise lever top summons up when she writes, let me be at the place of the castle. Let the castle be within me.

Mr. Davis: As if striking a compromise between the former Queen of friends and her fellow poet Angelou asserts a regal authority in this

Mr. Davis: This speaker refuses any opposition at first glance, the decision to break any line on of might seem like a risky move but Angela demonstrates elsewhere.

Mr. Davis: Elsewhere, and that she can and will break the line more safely on the phrase on the sturdy work.

Mr. Davis: And thereby earns our compliance. What happens to a poem. We might ask if a poet always and only breaks the line on a noun and a verb or on an adjective.

Mr. Davis: If we can agree that the choice to break on the preposition adds texture and variety. What else might add

Mr. Davis: In the context of this poem, the decision to snap the line at the preposition conceals its metrical achievement.

Mr. Davis: We might read the stanza two, maybe three times and not notice the I Am tap under the words. Listen again, this time with the new year fixated on and prepared for the meter let others have the privacy of touching words and love of loss of love.

Mr. Davis: We could easily reentry linear these words in order to furnish ourselves with the easy comfort of I am Vic pentameter. But if we did. So we would whittle away the effect the current arrangement produces as written.

Mr. Davis: The lines performed two fields, first they exemplify how an unusual line length fools. The ear into believing in his hearing a totally new measure second

Mr. Davis: If we broke the lines out of a desire to create I am to pentameter, we would mark the exciting break that

Mr. Davis: encourages us to mold love of loss before the phrase with lashes into the thornier love of loss of love.

Mr. Davis: In this moment, Angelou stages for us have a maneuver that appears to take place at the levels of sound and rhythm also resonates at the level of thought.

Mr. Davis: The line break behaves like a hinge and that's that hinge bends the readers mind hovers between love of loss and love of loss of love to be in love with loss. That's one thing to be in love with the loss of love is another

Mr. Davis: We could draw such delineation easily in essays tech pros, but the ability to entice the readers mind to drift in the eerie zone between the two phrases arises from control of meter and control of line.

Mr. Davis: Such control is the poet's purview, and that control constitutes an essential dimension of poetic authority.

Mr. Davis: Ultimately poetic authority amounts to the means by which a poet cages and far more important, excuse me cages our attention and far more important. Our attentiveness.

Mr. Davis: In order to conclude, I would like to examine iconic lines by Angelou and all of her so that we might speculate together about why such lines. Hold up.

Mr. Davis: In still I rise Angelou speaker ensures her own mortality, you may write me down in history with your bitter twisted lives. You may trod me in a very direct.

Mr. Davis: But still, like dust, I rise and stanzas later. You may shoot me down with words. You may cut me with your eyes. You may kill me with her hatefulness but still like air. I rise.

Mr. Davis: The ANA for Eric, you may, which sounds rather polite slices against the violent verbs. Write me down trod shoot cut

Mr. Davis: And kill the last lines, though, are the lines that people treat like slogans when we arrive on the variations on still I rise we experienced well earned catharsis we share in the speakers indignation and try on

Mr. Davis: Mary Oliver, the summer day ends on two of her most often quoted lines, but I want to quote the two lines proceeding those as well.

Mr. Davis: Tell me, what else should I have done doesn't everything die last into soon. Tell me what it is you plan to do with your one wild and precious life.

Mr. Davis: How much would we weaken these lines if we locked off, tell me.

Mr. Davis: How do we describe the potency of these questions, given this so often in the workshop we treat statements as if they are firmer regardless of context.

Mr. Davis: Then questions. Look at the adjectives in the final line once we reimagine, our lives are late for the deadline lives are stuck in quarantine lives are scrolling on our smartphone lives as wild and precious What responsibilities do we accept

Mr. Davis: This speaker mesmerises so completely that the reader experiences is this finale as uplifting, certainly, but as indicting to

Mr. Davis: Maya Angelou, and Mary Oliver, maybe if I may borrow phrases from the poet Mariel real Kaiser to have our greatest poets of possibility.

Mr. Davis: But as their most often quoted line suggest lines almost lifted away from the poets themselves unattributed prove that Angelou and all of her are also poets out

Mr. Davis: Okay, that's it for in terms of my prepared remarks, but I'd love to hear from some people, I beg you for questions.

Alexis Melson: Okay. Not like directly related to what you just read, but I know you said you were big into sound and rhythm.

Mr. Davis: Yeah.

Alexis Melson: So what do you think about like sound in terms of free verse and sound in terms of form because I

Alexis Melson: Definitely hits for a lot in form because a dynamic and the way we do that. But what do you think about sound and free verse and form.

Mr. Davis: Well, so to my way of thinking. And this is not a position. Anybody else has to take up but the best free verse is just as sonically rich

Mr. Davis: And is just as musically irreverent as the best formal poetry, it seems to me that sound and music are two of the ways by which we know we're writing poetry, be it free verse or not, rather than writing prose.



Mr. Davis: Otherwise, we end up with, with what Ezra Pound was afraid of right and i'm not somebody who quotes Ezra Pound all the time because he was a big, you know, huge fascist right and but he was afraid that we would just chop pros into lines.

Mr. Davis: And so it seems to me that sound and music are two defenses to bowl works, if you will, against making sure that we're not just carving up our products is that helpful and if not, how can I be helpful, because that's what I want is to be helpful.

Alexis Melson: That's very helpful. Thank you. I was curious what you would say so.

Mr. Davis: I'll say one thing, further

Mr. Davis: If what you're actually asking is, like, how do you get that sound machine revving. How do you get it going. You make a sound you really like and then you make it again.

Mr. Davis: Right. And then you do it again. And then you do it again until it becomes a tick or a mannerism or obnoxious and then somebody tells you to carve it back and you do that really slowly and what you're doing when you do that is gaining control of your technique.

Mr. Davis: Right. But it seems to me that the best thing I can recommend is that you over that you learn to do by over there. I'll stand by that learn to do by overdoing

Mr. Davis: Yeah, that that's that's bumper sticker worthy. I'll take that. Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Davis: Can I have another question like that, please.

Mr. Davis: I feel exceptionally well prepared for questions of that order.

Mr. Davis: Thank you. All of you so much for indulging me on that. And that was, that was a joy to write it is the longest piece of critical prose. I have composed since I started teaching high school

Mr. Davis: Which has been a disorienting set of experiences.

Laura Lee Washburn: And now it takes people a little second to unmute and there's some awkwardness about like jumping into ask a question on

Mr. Davis: More

Laura Lee Washburn: Tolerant by people that usually if you hold your spacebar down you can unmute quickly. And I think we have lots of time for questions. So whether you want to ask a question about poetry and sound in general or about the lecture itself up. I just want to encourage that again.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, absolutely.

Allison Blevins: I'll ask a question.

Mr. Davis: Please do.

Allison Blevins: Techniques might someone use to who writes free verse

To make

Allison Blevins: Like, I don't know how to ask the question, but to make

Allison Blevins: And and sound. You know, like I think when you're writing free verse. Sometimes you might get lost in the sound and you're like this. Sounds good. That sounds good. SOUND SOUND SOUND And then you

Allison Blevins: End up with something that's sounds. Beautiful.

Mr. Davis: This happens to me a lot. Yeah.

Allison Blevins: But it doesn't make any sense.

Mr. Davis: To put it another way, it doesn't make sense to anybody but you.

Allison Blevins: Act for sure that happens to me. So what I mean like, wait, what do we do about that. What strategies might you have for

Allison Blevins: You know that problem.

Mr. Davis: I want to marinate on that one for a second because I think it's really difficult to to balance.

Mr. Davis: SOUND And since I mean I'm kind of, if I can use sort of a 1960s verb on flashing on Gregory, or who talks about it temperaments or humorous poetic humorous. Is that right, Laura. I'm kind of looking because you're sort of a Gregory or person.

Mr. Davis: Okay so regardless of how he refers to them. He talks about story and song being among two of our principal powers as poets and if I'm understanding you correctly, Allison. You're asking how do we make sure that the story is coming through. Is that right,

Allison Blevins: Yeah yeah

Mr. Davis: How do we make sure that the story is coming through and so

Mr. Davis: I. The last thing I want to do at this moment is cop out, but I will say that

Mr. Davis: You're asking a question that requires that we have really careful.

Mr. Davis: Right, like one of the, one of the ways we know how much of the story is coming through is you say to somebody. What you mean you don't see that they're like, You must be joking. You don't see that I got that in there.

Mr. Davis: Right. And then the other person if they love you will say, babe. I'm sorry, but that's just not in the poem as written right now.

Mr. Davis: I believe that that's in your hand, but it's not on the page, and then you get mad.

Mr. Davis: Right, if you're me and then you go home into your, you know, into your Mary Oliver house that she built with stuff that she got out of the dumb, you know,

Mr. Davis: And you figure it out. I mean, so in the same way that I'm not somebody who quotes Ezra Pound, as a rule, I'm not somebody who spends a hell of a lot of time thinking about. Yes.

Mr. Davis: But for what it's worth. Yates would make a prose trot for his most ambitious poems

Mr. Davis: And the lore is that he would kind of hold them up side by side and asked himself. How much of this stuff in that pros truck that blueprint, if you will.

Mr. Davis: Did he managed to translate for lack of a better burn into the poem.

Mr. Davis: So are those reasonable answers. I think that last one is actually a strategy that last one is something a person really could do. You could write a prose trot for the poem, and then compare them and say, like, well, that element is not ringing in the poem right now and all. Yeah.

Allison Blevins: That makes sense.

Chris Anderson: Hey Josh, I really enjoyed your work and your

Chris Anderson: Speaker. It was so nice to hear you.

Mr. Davis: This so lovely coming from you because you have an amazing voice.

Chris Anderson: Well I you have a lovely voice. But, I mean, the

Chris Anderson: Content.

Mr. Davis: What you were saying, okay, okay.

Chris Anderson: But but anyways I'm especially interested in what you had to say about Mary Oliver, because I've

Chris Anderson: Read and thought a lot about all of her any even way back when I wrote my dissertation. I had some paragraphs, where I was more or less defending Mary Oliver against some people who really dismissed her

Chris Anderson: And anyways. May I guess I want to make a statement and then kind of get your reaction to it i i think Oliver sounds, her, her, her poetry often sounds very simple but it's actually quite complex.

Chris Anderson: And I think she I think some of the criticism, she gets maybe is because people look at the simplicity of the language. And sometimes the simplicity of the emotional expression.

Chris Anderson: But anyways, I want to make that statement. She, she sounds simple, but really is complex. So I wonder if you agree, and if you could comment on that at all where you see complexity. If you do

Mr. Davis: Yeah, so I absolutely agree. And I want to say that that I'll sort of double down and say that that some of that simplicity that I think you're making room for to it's hard to achieve.

Mr. Davis: It's not easy. And I think one of the reasons is not easy, is because of the problem that Allison just articulate

Mr. Davis: Right in the process of drafting a poem, so much of what one intense ends up on the cutting room floor doesn't make it into the poem itself.

Mr. Davis: And somehow, I come away from a Mary Oliver poem believing that she achieved the poem. She set out to achieve.

Mr. Davis: And and I'm say something in my talk about signs of strain and I just want to make clear that not showing signs of strain in the name of simplicity is something we only get to that final draft.

Mr. Davis: And that no doubt. I mean, I think one day will have access to all of those papers and we'll see that her early drafts were

Mr. Davis: More, More jagat for lack of a better. Adjective

Mr. Davis: And and then I guess I'll, I'll run the risk of sounding as if I'm reversing my position and I'll say absolutely that I think there are depth there that people don't give her credit for, for example.

Mr. Davis: Given some of the people, about whom she obsesses like Emerson, like the row when she uses a phrase like the Witcher three of living right which is sort of inspires my title here, which are ways of living. Then I mean she she's, she's

Mr. Davis: Simultaneously, putting one hand on that transcendental is history. And then she's also reaching back farther toward a kind of Puritan fear of which is King James is afraid that people are going to curse his

Mr. Davis: The eyes of his cows sort of thing. And so maybe that's one of the ways in which her complexity comes through, is that she is alluding when it's not always clear. She's a looting is that

Chris Anderson: A reasonable response that is. Thank you.

Yeah.

Mr. Davis: I mean, what I really want to do now, inspired by having thought about her in terms of craft is write an academic paper that does exactly what you're what you're proposing is, you know, mount this defense.

Mr. Davis: But the truth is, it was way more fun to look at what she's doing. And to think about what what how awful with this line be if we took out these words, those were the sentences. I think that that gave me the most pleasure to write

Laura Lee Washburn: As as my students are thinking about different ways that writers write about other writers

Laura Lee Washburn: Yeah, penis class.

Laura Lee Washburn: Yeah. Um, I think that the the talk, you gave today.

Laura Lee Washburn: I can imagine it in one of the one of those Donald Hall edited series.

Laura Lee Washburn: Poets on poetry like

Laura Lee Washburn: Like people just like what is this my talk. And here it is. And we give it to you. Um, what wants somebody has like the stature to have that whole book right

Laura Lee Washburn: So, but in this in this place that you're in, like,

Laura Lee Washburn: You think you would have to do to what the talk, you gave

Laura Lee Washburn: To get it published

Laura Lee Washburn: Will change it for now.

Mr. Davis: Oh, so the ending would have to be better. So that's, that's one answer to ending needs to be more substantial. Right now, the conclusion is, is in the mic, in my view, ah, no. I mean, I know who I am and I know what my capacities are

Laura Lee Washburn: Can I say that I loved when you came to the end and brought up the stuff that everybody's heard by those people and like, oh yeah. Every just like, oh, yes, I love that you did that at the end.

Mr. Davis: Well, so I was I was deeply afraid of what would happen if I didn't do it right and in one kind of mental model of the talk. I did that at the beginning.

Mr. Davis: In order to say like, I know we have these lines, but let's look at what what more there is going on.

Mr. Davis: But it just seemed to me that nothing can come after still I rise. Nothing can come after what will you do with your one wild and precious life.

Mr. Davis: And it was just so important to me that we hear that there's more than rapture going on there right and and

Mr. Davis: So I want to try to get back to answering your question. It might be that the talk would have to be longer. It might be that it would have to be more academic in nature.

Mr. Davis: It might be that I'd have to arrive at the Ellen Brian voice stage in my career when somebody wants from me. I saw that face when when somebody that's when somebody wants from me a book of what what originate as craft talks. But, uh,

Mr. Davis: I don't know i i would certainly try, I'd be willing to try to publish a draft very close to this one.

Mr. Davis: In part because, at the risk of repeating myself. It does include those sentences that sort of dare to workshop Angelou and and offer that. Imagine kind of how how inferior their drafts would be if we if we alter them by a handful of words.

Laura Lee Washburn: I feel like if I if I was. I mean, I obviously donated a journal every now and then I'm asked to look at somebody's paper and there's lots of different kinds of journals out there, sure. I feel like it's either there's legitimacy to craft analysis that is academic

Laura Lee Washburn: I mean,

Laura Lee Washburn: From from my money.

Laura Lee Washburn: I feel like I would be tempted to say throw and more a couple more examples of what you've already talked about and you're done.

Mr. Davis: Yeah yeah yeah no some more examples would be, it would be a great thing.

Laura Lee Washburn: But I wouldn't necessarily say like add a bunch of other ideas. What do you think, Lori Martin.

Lori Martin: Will. Well, we were just we've just published, you're getting ready to publish to have peace in Midwest quarterly that you know sort of takes apart some of Ted Cruz's poor. I mean it.

Mr. Davis: Yeah. And what what a wonderful compliment somebody like closer makes to Angelo, and Oliver.

Lori Martin: To very approachable and there's

Mr. Davis: There's the word I didn't use that I should have Lori Martin. Dang it. I showed us that approachable. That's exactly

Lori Martin: everyday words.

Mr. Davis: No, no. But that's exactly one of the appropriate words here is approachable. God for and, I mean, one of the first

Lori Martin: Yeah, I think, a piece like yours has a place in a literary journal and, you know, just the Midwest quarterly is one of them, you know,

Mr. Davis: Well, I appreciate that more than you can say the Midwest quarterly may receive a draft of this

Lori Martin: Very fine.

Mr. Davis: Oh wow, goodness.

Lori Martin: We have I can talk to you about that later. But yeah, that would

Mr. Davis: Be fine. I would love nothing more, you

Mr. Davis: Have to align that with delighting hey Lori. It's just so good to see your face.

Lori Martin: Oh my god you to expect so many good memories. Oh, you wouldn't you guys wouldn't believe our high jinks

Mr. Davis: That we got it. It's true. It's totally true.

Mr. Davis: And just

Chris Anderson: Going to chime in and kind of in response to Laura's question about, you know, revision of this

Mr. Davis: Repository. Yeah.

Chris Anderson: Just one thought I had, and I'm

Chris Anderson: You know I'm trained really as as a literature scholar that was

Chris Anderson: My patient rather than creative writing. And so one thought that I had a segment, maybe in a publish publishable article you might have a little bit of a little bit more

Chris Anderson: Kind of historical context or influences and what I'm thinking of is, you know, with Oliver the references you made to Emerson and Thoreau.

Chris Anderson: And so on and show more of, of how these authors fit into literary history.

Chris Anderson: Yeah, though, on the other hand, if you're, you know, if you're writing primarily for creative writers and, you know, shaping it more as as an essay on craft.

Chris Anderson: Then maybe

Chris Anderson: That's not necessary. But anyways, that's, that's my two cents.

Mr. Davis: Know, so can I respond to that.

Mr. Davis: Here, cuz i i love the the Phantom version of the essay that historic sizes in the way you're suggesting. I think Laura was terrified that that's what I would deliver

Mr. Davis: And I, I, and I was, I was afraid I would too. Right. Because my most recent training has been in a PhD program as a literature student, you know, studying 20th century American literature and so

Mr. Davis: One challenge among many that I had to confront that is kind of not that doesn't have anything to do with my teaching high school now is simply could, I could I managed to to hit a tone.



Mr. Davis: That was mature and poised, but not too dusty and then and then you know from from there if I didn't historic sighs did I have moves left in me from the from a time when I absolutely resisted writing

Mr. Davis: Conventional forgive the adjective academic literary criticism with with just about all of my fibers, you know, even though I was frequently called upon to do it.

Mr. Davis: And the reason that I resisted it back when I did is because I felt sometimes as if there was just no blood and no heat in the sentences and I just can't abide by.

Mr. Davis: You know, just can't can be dealing with that at all, which is why we get lines like that thing about music overheard from another room because otherwise I can cope and just sort of asked myself, What, what am I do

Chris Anderson: There's a lot of bad Academic Writing Center.

Mr. Davis: It's totally true. And yeah, I love what happens when we historic si somebody like Oliver, who

Mr. Davis: If you put her name in the database doesn't come up at all. People are not dissertation about Mary Oliver in Maya Angelou, they just aren't

Mr. Davis: And so I really do think there is value in taking up that particular I don't know strain of the critical power in the name of these women who otherwise you know don't excuse me have articles written about

Mr. Davis: I think I want them to be more than Poets. Poets

Mr. Davis: Is really what I'm, what I'm striving for.

Laura Lee Washburn: I mean that that's a valid argument that's the reason you write that and

Laura Lee Washburn: And publish it and

Laura Lee Washburn: Go ahead and finish your PhD.

Mr. Davis: No, no, I don't mind being teased. I mean, I want very much to it. It just feels as if circumstances conspiring against me at this point.

Laura Lee Washburn: Like life has called things you must do.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, right. That's right, things you must do.

Laura Lee Washburn: By the way, I have Emerson on my wrist today.

Mr. Davis: Do you really

Laura Lee Washburn: Do. It's just that live in the sunshine swim in the sea. Drink the wild air.

Mr. Davis: Do you use it. I love wild air. I love that. Do you still have the Anne sexton ring. Did you all know that Laura has an answer text and ring.

Laura Lee Washburn: I do, but it's written in Korean.

Laura Lee Washburn: I know

Mr. Davis: Yeah, I remember that it was

Mr. Davis: And I think I remember what it says and YouTube she'll dance the fire dance and iron shoes.

Laura Lee Washburn: And you will dance the fire dancing.

Mr. Davis: You will will will is important. You will dance the fire dance and shoots. Yeah.

Laura Lee Washburn: I often put that as the epigraph on the syllabus.

Mr. Davis: No, I mean, that's what we do for sure. Well, okay, they're good. So I'm going to say something about that.

Mr. Davis: It seems to me that dancing the fire dance and iron shoots had better produced sentences with an edge that's that's what I want to say about about style as it as it affects what I attempted to deliver today.

Laura Lee Washburn: I did. I like intend to turn the talk into a workshop of your talk.

Mr. Davis: Oh, I like that it went

Mr. Davis: From I'm happy to talk about how things can change.

Mr. Davis: I mean I poured what passion and effort. I could into it under the constraints I had, but that doesn't mean I've produced a finished piece. I mean, give me a break. I know better, no better than that.

Like

Laura Lee Washburn: I said, I just say it's useful for the students who are

Mr. Davis: Just useful.

Laura Lee Washburn: Useful with different tones styles audiences and to think about

Laura Lee Washburn: That that's

Mr. Davis: Kind of completely agree. I mean, so I don't know how useful this will be but Sharon old is somebody else who, if you put her name in the database. People are not dissertation about her.

Mr. Davis: But most people are not willing to say, oh yeah, Sharon knows what a trash poet to see what I mean. In fact, she's got I think a better reputation among the literati glitterati and then all of our or Maya Angelou

Mr. Davis: But she's still not coming up in those academic journals and so maybe that's why, as I think I said one of the things I was trying to do is sort of hit some sort of middle ground.

Mr. Davis: Between the typical craft talk and and academic piece.

Chris Anderson: And just you you you had a good great thought you learn to do by overdoing

Chris Anderson: Yeah, which I'm probably not gonna put on a bumper sticker, but I probably

Mr. Davis: Don't

Mr. Davis: Know, I mean, you don't want to encourage that into with drivers behind you.

Chris Anderson: I probably will quote you in classes at some point because that's

Chris Anderson: A wonderful thought

Mr. Davis: My appreciate that. That's sweeter than I can say.

Mr. Davis: That's very, very nice.

Chris Anderson: You learn by going where you have to go to

Mr. Davis: That's right. Rescue. Right. Right. Absolutely. Did you did you know of course you did. But you make me think of the the line in a

Mr. Davis: A letter to Sylvia Plath, in which Anne sexton who's coming up for the second time. Ah, says to Sylvia Plath, be careful with those lines or you're going to out roske roske right and so maybe that's an another

Chris Anderson: Another answer.

Mr. Davis: To how you learn about sound is you'll find somebody who is obsessive about sounds some model some poet out there be she famous or be she not right.

Mr. Davis: And then you you imitate her as closely as you there. And then slowly you start moving yourself kind of inch by inch towards some territory that you'll later call your own

Mr. Davis: I mean, the truth is, like, I don't actually know another way poets get themselves me. I mean, like, I mean when I say in the talk. When I say every voice. Once a listener.

Mr. Davis: Right. We these these voices, they, they come at us and they sort of they overtake us and we say, like, Well, I guess I find going to be anything approaching fulfilled. I'm gonna have to figure out how to do that.

Mr. Davis: I mean it sounds so lost in absurd but I really do think poetry is a vocation. You know, I think it's one of the things you'll do when you have no choice.

Mr. Davis: But to do it.

Laura Lee Washburn: Every voice wants to listen. Are we got another bumper sticker, Josh.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, I know. Well, I mean, of course, all of these slides. If subjected to maximum scrutiny will probably melt. But that's cool. That's cool.

Mr. Davis: How are we on time. I hope I didn't plow through that I really tried to keep my my pace measured

Laura Lee Washburn: We have 10 minutes left in class, you are right on Mark

Mr. Davis: Okay, good, good, good.

Mr. Davis: I would be so pleased to hear from from anybody from whom we've not heard. Yeah.

Mr. Davis: Comments, questions snarky remarks, all are permissible. I can, I can take it. I promise.

ELLEN DAVIS: I really appreciate your enthusiasm for this. This makes us very nice to listen to. Very easy to pay attention.

To

Mr. Davis: Thank you so much for saying that, you know, because as I was going through my sentences. I wasn't always looking at faces. And so it's hard to know. Am I losing everyone thank you very, very much.

Mr. Davis: And it's nice to meet you. And it looks like we have the same last name is that

ELLEN DAVIS: We do.

ELLEN DAVIS: Yeah, we have a very good thing.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, I agree.

I agree.

Alexis Melson: Okay, so I have to ask out of the two folks, you mentioned

Alexis Melson: My wish. Like what's your favorite poem from both of them.

Oh,

Mr. Davis: I need to think

Alexis Melson: You have to say what to like what element, what

Mr. Davis: Yeah, of course I do. You're totally right. But I need to. I need to marinate.

Laura Lee Washburn: And since since I'm a Libra who can never pick a favorite, but I will give you permission to just say any home and later decided my

Mr. Davis: Favorite well okay

Mr. Davis: I mean,

Mr. Davis: No, I mean, I understand. Favorite to be something that that shifts as time and circumstance change.

Laura Lee Washburn: I mean, it can even change in 10 seconds. You don't have to pick the perfect

Mr. Davis: Well, yeah. Okay. Okay. Um,

Mr. Davis: I think for Maya Angelou in my answer might be phenomenal woman.

Mr. Davis: Um, and for Mary Oliver my answer might be the night traveler and you will observe almost right away that those are not poems I wrote about

Mr. Davis: And I wonder if that's just because

Mr. Davis: Sometimes when we really love something, it can be difficult to anonymize it in the way that I tried to do in this talk, and it might also be because I

Mr. Davis: I kind of like didn't even think to write about those poems, because they just sort of sit in the back of my hand.

Mr. Davis: And they inform what I think a poem is how I think a poem moves. What a poem can and can't do, I mean I have a lot of poems that are like that. I mean, I think.

Mr. Davis: I think writers of any stripe, you start to accumulate furniture. Right, so like if you really love Jane Eyre, then Jane Eyre becomes part of your understanding of what a novel is how a novel works.

Mr. Davis: And so maybe it's hard to take a to take a critical look critical in the best sense in those dignifying sense at junior

Mr. Davis: Although I would love to hear somebody talk about Charlotte Bronte and craft and not literary history.

Mr. Davis: Which is of course endlessly fascinating, but I would still love to see somebody talk about. So for example, I mean, here I'm having a pitch deck memory.

Mr. Davis: I took a seminar with with Dr. Carlson Susan Carlson on the Bronte's my very first semester at Pittsburgh, which my very first semester grads.

Mr. Davis: And it changed it changed my life. It really did in part because she is a literary historian who also deeply loves writers

Mr. Davis: And I remember that there was a moment when we're talking about Charlotte brown takes the lead when instead of making some comments about culture, instead of making a comment about tech textual quirks. She simply said, look how much control. She has over this process.

Mr. Davis: And to me, that is that is a craft oriented comment right that's that you're you're leaning toward craft, because then we asked what does control mean and how do you achieve your team.

Mr. Davis: You should read Charlotte Bronte is the left is the PS on now, but oh and I didn't say why I didn't say why those are my favorites. So in phenomenal woman by Maya Angelou, I think it's my favorite, because

Mr. Davis: To call upon sassy sells it short. There's just, I mean 10,000 watts of attitude in that poem

Mr. Davis: And and i think it's possible to use that poem, regardless of one's race or ones, gender, just to make it a little easier to move in the moral physically move like actually be out in the world, of course, that's not something any of us are doing right now maybe

Mr. Davis: And then with with regard to marry Oliver's the night traveler.

Mr. Davis: I wonder if I can find it fast enough to read it. I wonder if I can do that.

Laura Lee Washburn: While you're looking for that Josh, I asked you if you would

Laura Lee Washburn: Mind sending me a copy of what you wrote for today that I

Mr. Davis: Will do that.

Laura Lee Washburn: Class.

Mr. Davis: I will gladly do that. Yeah. Especially since I didn't, you know, share my screen or anything. I'm very, very happy to do that.

Mr. Davis: Come on.

Mr. Davis: Okay, Mary Oliver the night travel

Mr. Davis: Passing by

Mr. Davis: He could be anybody a thief, a tradesman a doctor on his way to a worried house, but when he stops at your gate. You know, it is not just anyone

Mr. Davis: It is the night traveler. He has a gift for you, but it has no name. He calls it in the moonlight, and it's things like a newborn baby like a child at Christmas all night and all your life if you are willing will hold you like a mossy jaw a bath of light and answer.

Mr. Davis: So I think one of the many reasons that that's probably my favorite Mary Oliver Poland, the moment is that it sounds like a fairy tale.

Mr. Davis: Is that it sounds like a fairy tale. And it sounds like a fairy tale in the most numinous way and by numinous I mean lit up with mythic and poor

Mr. Davis: Right and so sometimes there are poems that just they put us in touch with an image that feels timeless that feels ancient, even if it is newly made

Mr. Davis: Right, and so that's another one of those illusions that we want. I think sometimes in our poems, is to create the feeling that something has always been there, even if it's relatively recently invented

Laura Lee Washburn: Well, we have three minutes left in class official and so um

Laura Lee Washburn: I just want to officially Thank you Josh. Davis for taking time out of your workday and rearranging everything and taking the time to write such a wonderful lecture for us and agreeing to share this recording, I'm going to stop recording right now.