

Hello and welcome. This is the graduate poetry workshop at UF. At the unlegislateable heart of it is something unknown to me, and possibly still to be thought of by you: the poems you will write and bring to class week after week. I do not intend to set you many assignments; I am fortunate in having colleagues who like to do that, and are much better at it than I am. If you need the security and imperative of a prompt, I will see what I can do. But broadly, the philosophy of this class (from your never-MFA'd professor) is the scriptural (and responsibly libertarian) 'do as thou wouldst be done unto'. In other words, I want you to write the poems you want to write, that you perhaps always wanted to write, the poems you have it in you to write, the poems that come to you to be written. These are what we will principally talk about in class.

I've never been quite sure of the relation between reading and writing, except that reading is pleasant anyway, and sooner or later useful. Read and walk and turn off your gadgetry are 3 things I would recommend to anyone wanting to write. This term we will read three books, possibly more. Two are selected poems by great poets recently deceased: *Learning Human*, by the Australian, Les Murray (+2019), and *Without End* by the Pole, Adam Zagajewski (+2021). One of infinite variety and prodigious energy and inventiveness, the other of small, learned, dissident, self-doubting musings, essentially the same poem again and again. A beam or a glow, and a sparkle.

The third book is Karen Solie's *The Road In Is Not the Same Road Out*. Solie is Canadian, and happily numbered among the living. She lives, to my understanding, here and there, taking short-term jobs. *The Road In* is her fifth book of poems. How to summarize her? A blend of intellect and vigour, snark (in the best sense!) and vulnerability and information. With all three, you will find yourselves in the presence of a distinctive mind and heart.

I hope you'll help me present and talk about these 3 poets; I hope you come to love them as I do. I hope to goodness we can have actual classes together. Assuming we do, I'd like you to bring paper copies of your poems to hand out, old-style.

Like poems, these things (syllabuses) are best when under 1 page. (Well, not always.)

Michael Hofmann

Office Hours, before class on Tuesday 1-4 pm, and by appointment.