

## ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE PABLO NERUDA UNIT

The reading and writing assignments for Pablo Neruda follow. **Be sure to come to class prepared.** You will write ONE ode in the style of Neruda, along with a reflection paper on the process; **both are due on Nov. 14.** See instructions for response paper on the back.

**For 11/3:** On ANGEL, read the PDF files “Ode to a Nightingale” (ANG-REP) and “The Ode According to Pablo Neruda” (ANG-CD), and pay special attention to “Ode to My Socks” in the second reading.

Homework: List as many differences as you can between Keats’s and Neruda’s odes. Consider at least the following categories: formal properties (line length, use of poetic meter, rhyme, poetic form, etc.); decisions as to type and level of language (level of diction, word order, complexity and length of sentences, etc.); *poetic-ness* (e.g., use of symbols, allusions, figures of speech, etc.); mood (e.g., tone, seriousness or lightness of images, language, etc.); the relationship between the poet and the object being praised. Then consider who is the intended audience for each poem and what the poem’s purposes might be.

**For 11/5 & 11/7:** In *Full Woman, Fleshly Apple, Hot Moon: Selected Poems of Pablo Neruda*, read the following odes: “Ode to the Artichoke”; “Ode to the Lemon”; “Ode to the Cat”; “Ode to Salt”; “Ode to the Onion”; “Ode to the Book (I)”; and “Ode to Ironing.” assignment of RP #4; **PRESENTATION #4 BEGINS ON 11/5.**

Focus Activity for 11/5: Choose either “Ode to the Artichoke,” “Ode to the Lemon” or “Ode to the Cat.” Then do the following: (1) make a list of all the images in the poem; (2) consider the connection, if any, between the images throughout the entire poem; in other words, what do lemons and planetariums have in common that licenses Neruda to move from one to the other?; (3) What central conceit or idea runs through the poem, and how does this invite us to see the celebrated object or creature anew?

Focus Readings and Activities for 11/7: TBD based on class progress.

**For 11/10:** Probably we will still be reading the odes, depending upon class pace.

Homework: Research either surrealism or Pablo Neruda’s political beliefs and his public life as a political appointee and official in Chile. Find out three facts about either term that you select. Do not turn in printouts from websites and be wary what sources you consult; an art resource book will give a superior definition of surrealism to those found in general dictionaries and encyclopedias. There are also discrepancies in Neruda’s biography on online sites such as Wikipedia. Then relate these facts to the day’s focus texts.

**For 11/12 & 11/14:** Read the PDF file “Neruda and Politics” (ANG-REP). We will focus on “Too Many Names,” “Poet’s Obligation,” and “Walking Around.”

Focus Questions for 11/12:

1. What do you consider a political poem to be? What, if anything, about these poems, strikes you as being political? Consider your research from 11/10 in your answer.
2. Why might it be a political statement to have a mind to confuse things?
3. Why does the speaker in “Too Many Names” dislike names? What power does naming hold?

**PRESENTATION #4 IS ON 11/5.**

**RP#4 (ode or anti-ode and reflection) is due in class on 11/14.**

**The final essay for the course will be assigned and discussed in class on 11/14.**

**SEE REVERSE FOR RESPONSE PAPER #4**

**Writing Assignments for Neruda:**

You have two writing assignments. You are to write an ode or anti-ode, per the directions below. Be sure your ode meets the requirements listed below. In addition, you are to write a two-page response paper (i.e., 500 words minimum) that discusses what you learned (perhaps about surrealism, figurative language, poetry, or Neruda) from completing this assignment. Your assignment is due in class on November 14.

The following text tells you how to write the ode or anti-ode:

#### WRITING AN ODE

As to the form or shape of the poem, write your ode in skinny lines that imitate Neruda's. When you read through the packet of odes, you'll begin to get a feel for his line. Writing shorter lines also allows the poet to control the length of the line more easily, and since we don't have rhyme or meter to help us out here, *keep the lines short!* It's also easier to "see" the images in the poem when the lines are skinny ones; their "thingness" has more of a direct impact on the reader's eye and mind and feelings.

Finally, write one ode to things or people or places that excite you, that you want everyone to know about and to celebrate along with you. Make your ode **at least three to five pages**, meaning, really "get into" it. Go as deep into the object or person or place that you have chosen, as deep as Neruda goes. Write in short lines, the way that Neruda does, and make sure that you double-space. Yes, you may write poems that are more than three to five pages long if you wish. The best rule is, if the poem is going well as you are writing it, don't worry about its length; keep going. You can always trim it back (or add more material) on a subsequent draft.

Finally, a couple of technical notes: 1) Do *not*, repeat, do *not* center your poem on the page using the "center" control of your word-processing program. This is a lazy way to create line breaks, and is unacceptable; 2) Please indicate, as I have above, if the first line on a new page continues the previous stanza: [*no stanza break*] means that you are not starting a new stanza on the new page. If your new page does begin with a new stanza. type [*new stanza*] at the top of the page. Both of these stanza indications *should be centered at the top of the page.*

If you have any questions about how the poem should appear on the page, follow the format of the poems that you have before you. They show you how your poem should look.

--Bill Zavatsky, "The Ode According to Pablo Neruda" (ms.)

Be sure as well to follow these requirements:

- Your ode must meet the page-length requirement (3-5 pages minimum)
- Your first stanza is to creatively explore the origins of your subject (as Neruda's odes do)
- **These figures should involve the material or sensory aspects of your chosen object, not just the uses to which your object is typically put**
- Your ode should use wild, surreal similes and metaphors to transform your subject/object in unexpected ways (e.g., the socks that become "two cannons")
- Your ode must possess wildness of imagination; it should not move in a clear, organized way; at least within stanzas there needs to be a wild slippage between images
- Your ode is to capture what it is like to see something as if for the first time
- Your ode must be long enough to make an arc, i.e., to explore a thing from multiple points of view
- Your final stanza is to drive to a moral and/or to address "you" the reader