



Bridgewater Review

Volume 30 | Issue 1

Article 8

Jun-2011

Poems by Jean Kreiling

Jean Kreiling

Bridgewater State College, jkreiling@bridgew.edu

Recommended Citation

Kreiling, Jean (2011). Poems by Jean Kreiling. *Bridgewater Review*, 30(1), 16-20.

Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol30/iss1/8

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

Poems by Jean Kreiling



Jean Kreiling is a Professor in the
Department of Music

Georgia O’Keeffe’s “Oriental Poppies”

*Their gaudy dignity a paradox,
their private centers dark but half-exposed,
they open wantonly, not quite enclosed
by painted borders. Roses, mums, or phlox
might be contained, but wild abandon mocks
this frame: each petal sprawls, forthrightly posed
with dazzling pride, all modesty deposed
by blazes that unpinned their ruffled frocks.*

*Their scarlet fire and inky mystery
ignite the air around them, but reserve
a secret seed of mischief or mad sleep;
and pallid mortals eye them jealously,
for Georgia’s poppies never lose their nerve
and always sow far more than we can reap.*





Georgia O'Keeffe, *Oriental Poppies*, 1927, oil on canvas, 30" x 40 1/8"

Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Museum purchase 1937

See the painting at the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis:
http://www.weisman.umn.edu/education/artwords/36_OKeeffe_OrientalPoppies_Lorsung.html



Winslow Homer Breezing Up (A Fair Wind),
Gift of the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation.
Image courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington
See the painting at the National Gallery of Art:
http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/timage_f?object=30228&image=4973&c=gg68)

Winslow Homer's “Breezing Up”

*The title's gentle forecast understates
the threat of this discolored sky; the ash
of clouds confounds the air and agitates
the water, raising crests of foamy flash.
The boat heels sharply—its distended sail
could dip into the brine with one more blow;
two boys lean backward on the starboard rail
as portside pitches perilously low.
But no one on the boat appears alarmed—
their rounded backs reveal the sailors' ease;
the sky's broad scraps of blue may have disarmed
its darker, more malignant auguries.
What sun remains makes youthful faces ruddy,
and fills the sail they nonchalantly study.*

Originally published in *Ekphrasis: A Poetry Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1
(spring/summer 2000)

John Singer Sargent's “Helen Sears”

*The girl with porcelain skin cannot resist
the milky blooms too massive for a bride;
the shadows at her back hardly exist
as brightness beckons brightness to its side.
She plays the petals like piano keys,
but looks beyond them into light that pours
through unseen glass. Do unknown liberties
entice her from the dazzling world outdoors?
She neither smiles nor frowns; the pretty turn
of white-bowed toe hints at a childhood spent
at graceful indoor games—but does she yearn
to feel unfiltered sun? The brightness bent
by privilege illuminates much less
than we might wish or Helen might confess.*

Originally published in *Dogwood: A Journal of Poetry and Prose*, a publication of Fairfield University (Spring 2006).



Photograph © June 2011 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
(See the painting at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:
<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/helen-sears-33550>)



Photograph © June 2011 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
(See the painting at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:
<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/deck-of-a-beam-trawler-gloucester-36526>)

Edward Hopper's “Deck of a Beam Trawler, Gloucester”

*He saw the art of work, despite the lack
of workers: the expectant energy
aboard the unmanned deck, the sinewy
preparedness of heavy ropes left slack,
the muscle of the mast. Where rusty black
abuts the dullish red of industry,
we know men labored, though we cannot see
their forms or faces or what they brought back.*

*They likely sailed before this sky turned blue,
before sunlit perspective clarified
the architecture of their work; they would
have felt their way through chores. The trawler's crew—
unlike the painter—didn't need a tide
of light to show them work they understood.*

Originally published in *Autumn Sky Poetry* 19 (October 2010).