



Information Overload

English 248-002: Literature and Contemporary Life

taught by Rachael Sullivan at UW-Milwaukee in the fall 2013 semester

Internet Poetry Assignment

The "internet poetry assignment" is due on **Thursday December 5**. For this assignment, you will create a poem inspired by the list below. This list provides just a taste of a genre I'm calling "internet literature." Everything on the list either [1] responds to internet culture as a theme, [2] uses features of the internet (such as hyperlinking) as literary techniques, or [3] depends on the internet as a distribution platform. Many pieces on the list do all three of these things. Also, because of the genre's affiliation with the internet as its unifying thread, many of these "poems" (you will see why I put this word in quotes when you look at the examples) deal with the theme or the feeling of information overload and tie into issues we've been discussing all semester.

For class on December 5, please

- Read the Kenneth Goldsmith excerpt [uploaded here \[.pdf file\]](#) and handed out in class on December 3.
- Choose at least two examples from the list below and study them closely ("study" might mean read, or click, or view). The supplementary readings are extra and might help you understand the poem better. Anything marked "supplementary" is not an actual "poem." Be sure to choose two "poems."
- Make your own internet poem by imitating an example. I recommend trying flarf, screenshots, or image macros; these forms are easy to do and they don't require a lot of technical knowledge.

The internet poetry assignment is 10% of your final grade. As long as you turn something in, it will be an "A." (In other words, I am not judging your poetic and artistic ability here.) Submit your completed poem as an image file, a link, PDF, or Word document to the designated dropbox on D2L. In class on December 3, we'll meet in the Library E159 computer lab to begin working on the assignment. To help with the assignment, some of the tools we will discuss are [GIMP](#), [Greenshot](#), the [Meme Generator](#), and [Googlism](#).

Here is the list of examples, divided by sub-genres:

Twitter poetry

- Metaphor-a-Minute: <https://twitter.com/metaphorminute>
- Supplementary reading: About Metaphor-a-Minute, by Leonardo Flores: <http://iloveepoetry.com/?p=52>
- Horse_ebooks: https://twitter.com/Horse_ebooks

- Horse_ebooks poetry by Erin Watson: <http://noexperiences.com/>
- Supplementary reading: "Finding Actual Poetry in @Horse_ebooks" by Esther Zuckerman (2012): http://www.thewire.com/entertainment/2012/08/finding-actual-poetry-horse_ebooks/55894/
- Supplementary reading: "@Horse_Ebooks Is the Most Successful Piece of Cyber Fiction, Ever" by Robinson Meyer (2013): <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/09/-horse-ebooks-is-the-most-successful-piece-of-cyber-fiction-ever/279946/>
- Supplementary reading: "Give Me a Break. @Horse_ebooks Isn't Art" by Jason Farago (2013): <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114843/horse-ebooks-twitter-hoax-isnt-art>

Hypertext

- "Under Language" by Stuart Moulthrop (2007): <http://iowareview.uiowa.edu/TIRW/vol9n2/artworks/underLanguage/index.htm>
- "Disappearing Rain" by Deena Larsen (2000): <http://www.deenalarsen.net/rain/>
- Supplementary reading: About hypertext, by Jill Walker Rettberg: <http://jilltxt.net/?p=1918>
- Supplementary reading: Interview with Stuart Moulthrop (2011): <http://www.narrabase.net/stuart-moulthrop.html>

Flarf

(all pieces date between 2001 and 2009)

- Katie Degentesh: "Three Poems" <http://jacketmagazine.com/30/fl-degent.html>
- K. Silem Mohammad: "Three Poems" <http://jacketmagazine.com/30/fl-ksm.html> and "Poems About Trees" <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/237052>
- Jordan Davis: "Three Poems on Demand" <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/237046>
- Nada Gordon: "Unicorn Believers Don't Declare Fatwas" <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/237054>
- Supplementary reading: About flarf, by Gary Sullivan: <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/22109>
- Supplementary reading: Introduction to flarf, by Kenneth Goldsmith (2009): <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/article/237176>
- Supplementary reading: Flarf eulogy/appreciation, by Sharon Mesmer: <http://www.chicagoschoolofpoetics.com/2013/putting-down-my-burger-to-kick-in-the-door-an-appreciation-of-flarf/>

Net.art

- ted warnell's "a_narchY blog": http://warnell.com/blogs/a_narchy.htm
- jodi.org: <http://www.jodi.org/>
- 404.jodi.org: <http://404.jodi.org/>
- Supplementary reading: About Jodi, from Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jodi_\(art_collective\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jodi_(art_collective))

Alt-lit and internet poetry

- "The Geisha Series" by Sian Rathore: <http://thegeishaseries.tumblr.com/>(hitting "random" over and over is the best way to read this, I think.)
- Internet poetry Tumblr: <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/archive>
- Selected pieces from the Internet Poetry Tumblr:
 - "Maybe the revolution" image macro <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/68306036507>
 - "I want an apple cider donut" iPhone screenshot <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/65710992547>
 - "Futon" Twitter erasure poem <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/56543084982>
 - "doesanythingidomatter" animated .gif <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/62907363457>
 - "stars" screenshot <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/63472399834>
 - "uninhibited poetry" image macro <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/58452344123>
 - "A diva is whatever" iPhone screenshot <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/56910818558>
 - "My pain" image macro <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/52806315835>
 - "How to become" screenshot collage <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/52479276826>
 - "What does the pope" Google search poem <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/51819540906>
 - "With so much to remember" screenshot <http://internetpoetry.tumblr.com/post/50460898699>
- Supplementary reading: Steve Roggenbuck on internet poetry: <http://www.steveroggenbuck.com/2011/02/doctrine-on-internet-poetry.html>
- Supplementary reading: "The Writer as a Meme Machine" by Kenneth Goldsmith (2013): <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2013/10/the-writer-as-meme-machine-how-has-the-internet-altered-poetry.html>
- Supplementary reading: About alt-lit: <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/subcultures/alt-lit>