



## 2022 Series 1 Course D

Note: Subject to changes related to Covid-19 situation at the time

- Title**            **The Sonnet**
- Dates**           **Thursdays 3 March – 7 April 2022**
- Time**            **10 am – 12 noon**
- Venue**           **Leith Bowling Club, 2 Duke Street, North Dunedin**
- Convenor**       **Alan Jackson**  
Email:     alanjackson@xtra.co.nz  
Phone:     473 6947
- Developer**      **Chris Ackerley**
- Course fee**     \$45 (please do not pay until you receive an invoice)

Emeritus Professor Chris Ackerley will give an introduction to the Western world's most popular literary form, from its origins in the troubadour songs of Provence (complexity and musicality) and its introduction to the Tudor court, to recent times. The course will consider the evolution of the English sonnet and as a variation of that, the Shakespearean, from the enduring Italian (or Petrarchan) model. The emphasis will be on how to READ a sonnet: the appreciation of ingenuity and emotion made palpable within a long tradition of "metaphysical" paradox and wit.

**All applications must be received by Thursday 3 February 2022.** You will receive a response to your application by Monday 14 February 2022.

Please contact the Programme Secretary [courses@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:courses@u3adunedin.org.nz), phone 467 2594 with any queries.

# The Sonnet

**3 March**

## **An introduction to the sonnet**

- The transition from Provence, through Italy (Petrarch, Dante) to the Tudor court (Surrey, Wyatt)
  - The defining features of the Italian (or Petrarchan) sonnet (binary structure, metrical ingenuity, the conceit)
  - How to read a sonnet: the visual, the musical, "metaphysical" wit
  - The art of *parallelism*: phonetic, syntactic, semantic
- Key poem*: Thomas Wyatt, 'Whoso list to hunt...'

**10 March**

## **The English sonnet**

- The differences between the Italian and the English forms
  - The defining qualities of the English sonnet
- Key poems*: Mark Boyd, 'Fra banc to banc...' (the Italian form); Edmund Spenser, 'One day I wrote...' (the transition to the English form); Michael Drayton, 'Since there's no help...' (the art of the dramatic); John Donne, 'Batter my heart...' (faith and profanity)

**17 March**

## **The Shakespearean sonnet**

- The Shakespearean sonnet is NOT the English sonnet, but a derivation of that form
  - The defining qualities of the Shakespearean sonnet
- Key poems*: 'My mistress' eyes...' (the art of the conceit); 'Shall I compare thee...' (the art of love); 'That time of year...' (the art of parallelism); 'The expense of spirit...' (the art of obscenity)

**24 March**

## **Assessing the sonnet**

- The good, the bad, and the so-so (how do we tell?)
  - The tuning of the in-built crap-detector (critical judgement)
- Key poems* (one good, one bad, one so so—but which is which?): Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'How do I love thee?'; George Eliot, 'School parted us...'; Christina Rossetti, 'Remember me...'  
Then one more, Wilfred Owen, 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' (obviously excellent, as we might agree, yet hesitate before saying that this is so)

**31 March**

## **Two great sonnets**

- By which the mind is boggled, that so much can be packed into so little
  - The two great themes of the sonnet, love and faith
- Key poems*: Sir Philip Sidney, 'Loving in truth' (Astrophel's seduction of Stella); Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'The Windhover' (God's seduction of Hopkins)

**7 April**

## **The sonnet at play**

- The paradox of a freedom constrained by discipline and rules
  - That by mastery of discipline poets may break the rules
  - That emotion tempered by wit may create aesthetic delight
- Key poems*: variations (sacred and profane) on the sonnet form, from Shakespeare to Anthony Burgess