MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

About MAPS

What makes MAPS unique is its emphasis on collaborative process. MAPS is not a single, didactic edifice that hides its agenda behind a veil of authority. It is a living, breathing conversation between hundreds of poets, scholars, and readers, constantly growing and presented in an eminently clear and usable way. Extraordinary in its depth and breadth, and a one-of-a-kind resource for teaching modern American poetry, MAPS provides a single clearinghouse for some of the best criticism on the best poets of our time.

Richard Powers

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This web site grew out of the experience of editing Anthology of Modern American Poetry for Oxford University Press. Both I and the members of my Advisory Board realized that readers would benefit from having information readily available that could not possibly fit in a book. This ranged from historical background to analyses of the poems themselves. The site is designed to help all readers of modern poetry, not just readers of the Oxford anthology. Thus anyone interested in Robert Frost or H.D. or E. E. Cummings or Patricia Smith or any of the other poets should find interesting material here.

Just as the anthology itself is designed to win new readers for the poets included, so too is the web site designed to help draw attention to the many fine critical and historical books written about American poetry. If you enjoy the excerpts reprinted here, we urge you to read the books in their entirety. If your local library does not own them, we urge you to recommend their purchase.

The nature of each site depends on what makes sense for a particular author or group of authors. The Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, and William Carlos Williams sites are so far largely devoted to readings of their poems, whereas the Kay Boyle, Angel Island, and Japanese American Concentration Camp sites are largely devoted to historical background. The Harry Crosby site draws heavily on his wonderful archive at Southern Illinois University. We welcome archival contributions for other authors. Most sites devoted to individual poets should, however, eventually have a biographical entry and bibliography. In the course of its first year MAPS evolved into an online journal. By the middle of 2001 MAPS had published over fifty original essays, including

In some cases MAPS is the only source for scholarly commentary on a given poet's work. Even for well-known poets MAPS often offers the only detailed analyses of particular poems. Less than two years after going on line, MAPS included previously unpublished analyses of Sherman Alexie's "Scalp Dance for Spokane Indians," Kay Boyle's "A Comunication to Nancy Cunard," John Beecher's "Beaufort Tides," Countee Cullen's "Tableau," Louise Erdrich's "Dear John Wayne," Martin Espada's "Federico's Ghost," "Imagine the Angels of Bread," amd "The Skull Beneath the Skin of the Mango," Kenneth Fearing's "Dirge," Langston Hughes's "The Bitter River" and "Madam and the Phone Bill," Adrian Louis's "A Colossal American Copulation," Claude McKay's "The Harlem Dancer," Scott Momaday's "Purple," "Buteo Regalis," "Rings of Bone," "Carriers of the Dream Wheel," and "December 29, 1890," Edna St. Vincent Millay's "I Forgot for a Moment" and "Sonnets from an Ungrafte Tree," Wendy Rose's "Truganinny," Carl Sandburg's "Elizabeth Umpstead" and "Planked Whitefish," Gertrude Stein's "Patriarchal Poetry," Genevieve Taggard's "Everyday Alchemy" and "Mill Town," Lucia Trent's "Breed, Women, Breed," Jean Toomer's "Portrait in Georgia," and Richard Wright's "We of the Streets," among others. We invite further submissions by e-mail and on disk. MAPS is both an archive and a refereed journal.

MAPS also includes excerpts from previously published analyses of poems, biographical information, relevant illustrations (such as book jackets, broadsides, paintings, drawings, comics, and photographs), manuscripts, drafts of poems, bibliographies, historical background, statements on poetics, interviews, mini-essays on important issues pertinent to the poet, book reviews, archival resources, and study questions. Contributors are encouraged to be imaginative and inventive.

Web sites are inherently never "finished," because new things can always be added. We always have a stack of material waiting to go on line. Material that arrives by e-mail or on disk usually gets first priority because it is much faster to upload.

You can navigate the site by clicking on "Poets," then either scroll down the list or jump to a poet by using the alphabet bar.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Do I need to know anything about web design to contribute to MAPS?

   No. Again, no. You do not have to be a web master. Send us word processing files (saved as text files) on disk or, for short contributions, clean high quality photocopies. We will digitize them and translate them into HTML. At the moment, IBM-compatible files are a bit easier for us to handle. It's also a good idea to include a hard copy of anything sent on disk. If you have suggestions about layout, write them on the printout.

2. How can I send illustrations?

There are several ways. <u>Color</u> photocopies on good quality GLOSSY paper work well. Even black and white photos should be treated as <u>color</u> when copying them. Or you can digitize images and put them on a site where you live; send us the web address and we will download them here. Remember that it is easy to place color illustrations on the web.

3. How should material be organized?

Things to keep in mind: break things up into manageable units, so that they download promptly. If you are assembling an entire site, give us a table of contents to put on the opening page. Try to make titles clear and understandable.

4. Can I contribute to an existing site?

Yes. People adding a single new section to a poet's site will be identified as a contributor. People adding multiple sections to a site can become a co-editor. Send brief contributions (or proposals for longer contributions) for review by the editor:

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5. Can I expand a quotation from my work that's already on-line?

Yes. In order to stay within fair use, we have condensed some passages more than we would have liked. We have written for permission for longer excerpts, but we could only manage so many letters. If you would like to see an excerpt from your book or essay expanded, please send us a note asking us to do so and granting permission, along with the text to be added. For excerpts longer than a page or two, please send a diskette if possible. You can also revise a published analysis that has been reprinted on MAPS. The internet gives every essay a second chance; if you've wanted to correct or revise an earlier analysis, e-mail us the new version.

6. Can I publish new essays on MAPS?

Yes. People began submitting unpublished essays to MAPS soon after it went online. After a year, MAPS evolved into an on-line journal. Submissions are encouraged by e-mail or on disk. All submissions are refereed. MAPS is also a good place to publish heavily illustrated pieces, since illustrations are easy to do on the web and can look very good on line. We will include a copyright notice in the author's name. MAPS has a diverse audience of students, faculty, and general readers——an audience otherwise difficult to reach.

7. Can poems be included?

Only within certain limits. Poems published in 1923 or earlier (OR poems by authors who died 70 or more years ago) can be put on line without permission. More recent poems require permission, although we can share poems that are already on line elsewhere. We can also make links to other poetry sites.

8. Can handwritten manuscripts (like drafts of poems) go on the web?

Yes. We usually need permission, but they can look very good there. See, for example, the [Harry Crosby](#) site.

9. Can we recommend links to other sites?

Yes. Send the URL to Cary Nelson. If you find any errors, we'd be happy to receive those as well at crnelson@uiuc.edu

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