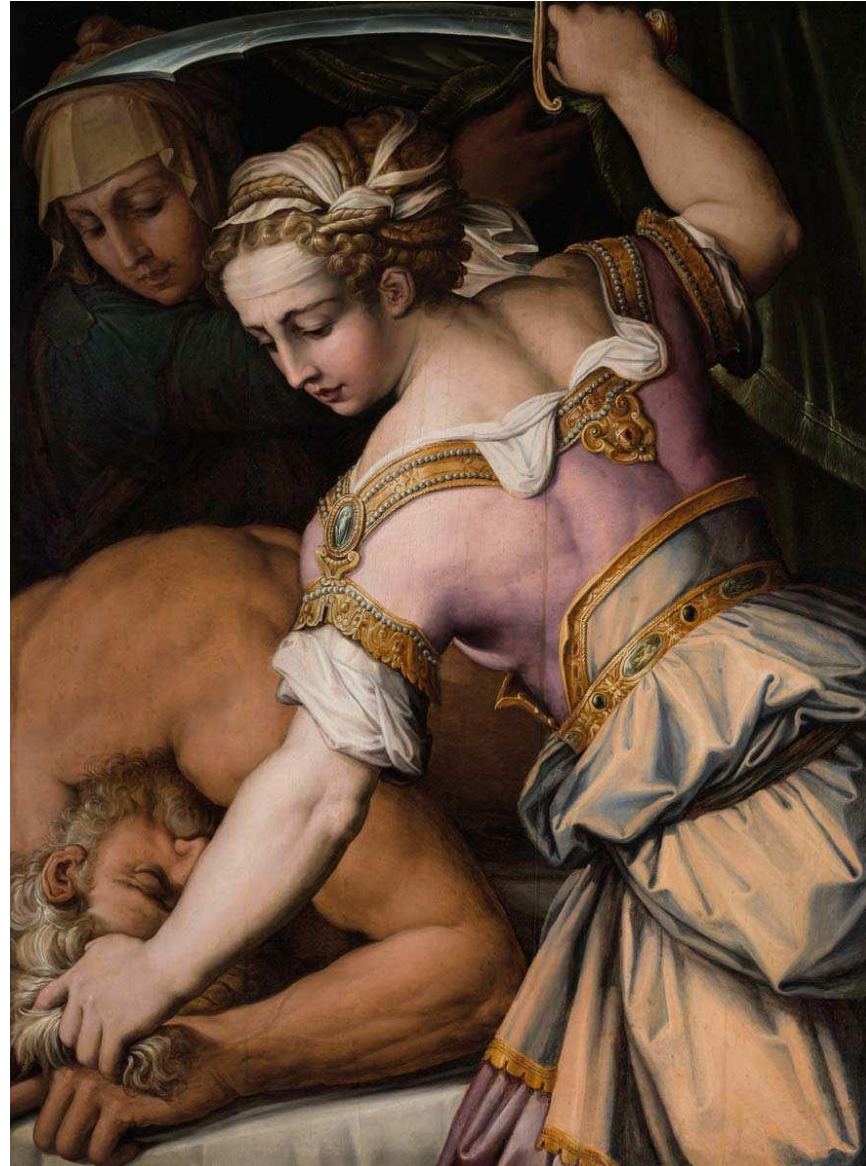


**T.S. Eliot:**

*Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion.*



## Judith

Wondering how a good woman can murder,  
I enter the tent of Holofernes,  
holding in one hand his long oiled hair  
and in the other, raised above  
his sleeping, wine-flushed face  
his falchion with its unsheathed  
curved blade. And I feel a rush  
of tenderness, a longing  
to put down my weapon, to lie  
sheltered and safe in a warrior's  
fummy sweat, under the emerald stars  
of his purple and gold canopy,  
to melt like a sweet on his tongue  
to nothing. And I remember the glare  
of the barley field; my husband  
pushing away the sponge I pressed

to his burning head; the stubble  
puncturing my feet as I ran,  
flinging myself on a body  
that was already cooling  
and stiffening; and the nights  
when I lay on the roof – my emptiness  
like the emptiness of a temple  
with the doors kicked in; and the mornings  
when I rolled in the ash of the fire  
just to be touched and dirtied  
by something. And I bring my blade  
down on his neck – and it's easy  
like slicing through fish.  
And I bring it down again,  
cleaving the bone.

**Vicki Feaver**

from *The Handless Maiden* (Jonathan Cape, 1994)

## To His Coy Mistress

Had we but world enough and time,  
This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down, and think which way  
To walk, and pass our long love's day.  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the flood,  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.  
My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires and more slow;  
An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;  
Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.  
For, lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear  
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found;  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
My echoing song; then worms shall try  
That long-preserved virginity,  
And your quaint honour turn to dust,  
And into ashes all my lust;  
The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,  
Now let us sport us while we may,  
And now, like amorous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour  
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.  
Let us roll all our strength and all  
Our sweetness up into one ball,  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Through the iron gates of life:  
Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

**Andrew Marvell**

## From His Coy Mistress

Some days I think I will become a nun,  
book in a convent miles away,  
cut off my hair, and dress in black  
wanting to purge myself of men.

I'd kneel and pray and chant a lot,  
lie in a narrow bed,  
devising titles of unwritten books:  
*A Semiotics of Flirtation. Love:*  
*Some Concepts of the Verb 'To Sin'.*

One thing's for sure. By wanting you,  
I'm not the woman that I think I am.  
I cannot eat or sleep at all,  
just think about your lovely mouth

the eerie moonlight and the Northern seas.  
And hope my body's still the temple  
that you'd come upon, by chance,  
to excavate, a hundred years from now,

burn incense in, and dance and sing,  
oh, yes and weeping, worship in.

**Deryn Rees-Jones**

*From Signs Round a Dead Body (Seren, 1998)*

## COY (x)

Let go of  
him? I cannot  
and thus I  
make a fire  
of my ashes. Let  
go of him? I  
cannot and thus  
I grow from  
tear to tide to  
flood and  
back. Let go  
of him? I  
cannot and  
thus I let his  
worms into  
my forehead,  
eyes, breast,  
heart. Let

go of him?  
I cannot and  
thus I lower  
myself morning,  
each morning,  
back to his  
rough-hurrying  
embrace. Let go  
of him? I  
cannot and thus  
I make my life  
this still life  
preserv'd, part-  
him, part-I.  
Let go of  
him? I cannot  
and thus I  
grow to devour

my state in  
his place and  
skin my each  
and all with  
this iron and  
think-strife. Let  
go of him? I  
cannot and thus  
I may find a  
rough pleasure,  
sweetness of  
tear, in this  
long complain.  
Let go of him?  
I cannot! My  
eternity be  
with him vault.

**Maurice Riordan on the cento:**

*The CENTO is of course a form of intertextuality – a pure form of a much more widespread process of cross-fertilisation, cross-pollination, hybridisation, and indeed translation, that are all part of the vitality of the tradition.*

I remember the young day (Pound, 'Langue d'Oc')

I remember the trees, and the high, white walls, and how the sun was always on the towers;  
(Mew, 'I Have Been Through the Gates')

I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon. (Eliot, 'Mr. Apollinax')

I saw it then as we see things in dreams – I do not remember how long I slept  
(Mew, 'I Have Been Through the Gates')

But I remember smiling too (Mew, 'The Fête')

And how the silence surged softly backward. (de la Mare, 'The Listeners')

You for a moment giving me your eyes (Mew, 'My Heart is Lame')

Where are you now? (Hardy, 'To Lizbie Browne')

Blessings emblazoned that day; (Hardy, 'The Self-Unseeing')

The showers beat (Eliot, 'Prelude I')

Lucent and lovely (Yeats, 'Time Passes')

Ran and sparkled down each side of the road (Thomas, 'The Manor Farm')

And red the sunlight was, behind it all (Pound, 'The House of Splendour')

A flight of pigeons fluttered up into an early evening mackerel sky. (Mew, 'Ne Me Tangito')

Summer was past and day was past. (Frost, 'Bereft')

And you went, and I let you go! (Mew, 'In Nunhead Cemetery')

You that were life, our little wind-blown hearts! (Mew, 'The Forest Road')

And if only you had left a light (Mew, 'The Changeling')

The air, which is now thoroughly small and dry, (Eliot, 'Ash Wednesday')

Would have been different. For it would have been (Thomas, 'As the Team's Head-Brass')

Like the brook's water glittering (Thomas, 'The Sun Used to Shine')

## Julia's writing exercise: Create a Cento!

**Choose from one of the following themes:**

- Arrival
- Night
- Loss
- Transformation
- Thresholds
- Memory



### **Step 1 – Search for and copy lines (Spend no more than 10 mins on this)**

Read through the Source Pool poems and highlight 8–12 lines that catch your attention – for their imagery, rhythm, emotional pull, freshness or even strangeness. Copy and paste your chosen line (or write them out) into your own document.

Choose lines from at least three different poets for variety.

### **Step 2 – Arrange into a poem**

Rearrange your chosen lines into a sequence that creates a mood, story, or surprising shifts.

A re-cap of the basic rules:

- Use only complete lines from the source poems (though you may break them mid-way through).
- You may repeat lines, reorder them, or change punctuation.
- You may make small grammatical changes (pronouns, tense) to help with flow.
- You may not add entirely new words.

**MEET BACK WITH THE GROUP AT 20.10. GOOD LUCK – AND HAVE FUN!!**