

Coming This Fall

10-560 Advanced Creative Writing: Poetry as Mystery

TR 9:35 – 10:50

John Gallaher



Jules Olitski, Instant Loveland, 1968

When we read texts in poetry workshops, we tend to read toward a revision of the poem that yields a story that all can follow. Toward a narrative, a certain coherence, or clarity of purpose. But when we talk of the poems we ourselves love, the ones we return to, we often speak as one haunted, as one enthralled.

In this course we are going to look for ways to encourage this feeling of hauntedness, this mystery. We will read poems, look at artworks and photographs, and write, poems.

Spring Thaw

Paige Ackerson-Kiely

Spring with your disheveled mouths beginning
to open. Glad I am for doorways.
For a simple frame.

In winter I allow you to guess correctly
that I am sleeping. The paw of me
placed over the snout of me. My friends
the dead flowers in a windowbox
nowhere I knew where my friends were.

I allow you to guess correctly. The confidence
you will gain will make speaking—
a tomcat sprays the dogwood—blooming.

Hello. I was forgotten. When my jaw at first
unlocks I will say no one has loved me as much.

