What happened to Mr. Stokes?

No one cares about what happened to Mr. Stokes. He was so loud anyway, like a dog no one wanted to be around, how strange. He was more like a seagull, he always sounded the same.

I wondered about his wife. Weren’t they recently married, I asked a friend of his, Tommy-Danny-Charlie-no, Andrew, who spoke like a roman candle and came down like a popped balloon. You just can’t say balloon angrily. So I said it in German, der luftballon, and I decided to let Mr. Stokes be funny, if not strips of mylar tell-tailing in the trees. I could see the wind. I let him ruin the beach and keep company with the fleas beneath white sand. He will outlast the ancient ruble because he is polyester resin now.

Imagine if it was like that for you and me and Mr. Stokes. We would become immortal residents on this planet and our names could never be spoken in anger.
Creative Writing: Introduction to Fiction and Poetry

Instructor: Jesse Bennett Stokes
Office hours by appointment

Course overview:
The purpose of this class is to read and study fiction and poetry in order to make our own poems and stories. We will read in order to understand how to write. We will write in order to workshop. The readings will suggest models for us to imitate and our discussions will suggest how to apply these mechanics to our own work. The workshop is where we share and edit our own work.

Course Objectives:
1. To write poems and stories
2. To identify and analyze the techniques used in the readings
3. To understand and apply these techniques to our own work and feedback in a workshop
4. To communicate clearly and effectively in order to maximize the potential of our own work

Structure:
The first half of the semester we will read and write poetry. The second half we will read and write fiction.

The first class of every week will be focused solely on the assigned reading. There will be a discussion of the craft elements each author is known for and if we can imitate them effectively. This will be followed by an in class writing exercise in response to our discussion. This class is only successful with your participation. Come ready to discuss.

The second class of the week will be our workshop. Students will bring in their poems and stories as well as a copy for everyone in the class including me. The student author will read their own work and the class will provide professional and helpful feedback both written and spoken. There will be an opportunity for the student author to ask questions after the discussion.

Required text:
A student packet will be provided with the necessary readings.

Policies:
Grading
Attendance and participation 40%
Written response 30%
Final Portfolio 25%
Recitation 5%

Attendance
This class is only possible with participation. If you aren’t there you won’t do well. You have to be there, and you have to participate. Two unexcused absences will result in a reduction in your grade. If you’re early you’re on time and if you’re on time you’re late.

Plagiarism
If you didn’t write it I don’t want to see it. Don’t do it. NYU’s policy is strict and I will follow it.
Electronics
No phones. Put them on silent. Turn them off. I don’t want to hear them and I don’t want to see them. You may take notes with a computer.

Schedule:
Week 1: Craft- Frank O’Hara and Guillaume Apollinaire
   Practice Workshop- Students bring response poems
Week 2: Craft- Pablo Neruda and Cesar Vallejo
   Workshop- Students bring response poems
Week 3: Craft- C. P. Cavafy
   Workshop- Students bring in response poems
Week 4: Craft- Ada Limon
   Workshop- Students bring in response poems
Week 5: Craft- Sharon Olds
   Workshop- Students bring in response poems
Week 6: Craft- Katherine Barnette
   Workshop- Students bring in response poems
Week 7: Craft- Edward Hirsch
   Workshop- Students bring in response poems
Week 8: Craft- Richard Wright and Basho
   Workshop- Students bring in response poems
Week 9: Craft- Jorge Luis Borges
   Workshop- Students bring in response poems/prose
Week 10: Craft- Franz Kafka
   Workshop- Students bring in response story
Week 11: Craft- Anton Chekhov
   Workshop- Students bring in response story
Week 12: Craft- Ottessa Moshfegh
   Workshop- Students bring in response story
Week 13: Craft- Roberto Bolano
   Workshop- Students bring in response story
Week 14: Craft- Taeko Kono
   Workshop- Students bring in response story
Week 15: Craft- Alice Munro
   Workshop- Students bring in response story
Week 16: Class Reading