Stephen Merriam Foley, Brown University

Who brought this rhyme about?

Spenser identifies with Skelton by rhyming, as if the question "Who knows not Colin Clout" were answered by Skelton's earlier verses, "My name is Colin Clout/ Who brought this rhyme about." To bring a rhyme about is also to make language reverse or invert or turn around. Verse is the material differentiation of voice from itself, from the necessities of "grammar, trope, and theme," an inversion of the forwards (prose) direction of discourse. Awareness of the re-versals of voice at moments of semantic formation pauses the *hermeneutic*s of voice as rhetorical product by recognizing the embodied voice as chime, beat, and even sometimes noise in relation to semantic modes of language power. And among the performative icons of poetics in Spenser's practice are the language practices of "September" and how they display voice-- in dialect, rhyme, and the writing of beast fable, each a place where sound and noise hover together.

Jessie Hock

"The Erotic Reception of Lucretius's *De rerum natura*"

My paper concerns what I call the erotic reception of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* (*DRN*) in early modernity. Lucretius versified Epicurean philosophy in *DRN* in order to popularize the difficult philosophy in ancient Rome: he hoped that readers would come to accept the ideas after being seduced by the poetry. My contention is that *DRN*'s erotic poetics instantiates a tradition of erotic reception (from antiquity through and beyond early modernity) in which readers act out (or resist!) the poem's seduction. To give just one example, Lucy Hutchinson calls her translation of *DRN* a "wanton dalliance with impious books." From this initial claim, I move to several points about the lyric reception of *DRN*. First, although *DRN* is itself a didactic epic, it has an enormous impact in early modernity in the domain of lyric poetics. This is at least partially, I posit, because the importance of love and erotics in *DRN* made it particularly adaptable to the Petrarchan tradition in its various iterations. On a related note, although we are far more comfortable discussing Renaissance and early modern lyric in relation to neoplatonism, I propose that Lucretius was also profoundly important to early modern theorizations of lyric reading, offering readers not only a very different way to conceive of poetry's relation to materiality, sexuality, spirituality, and transcendence, but also ways to think the affects and effects of reading. Additionally, I test out the claim (without, I hope, reductively marginalizing medieval materialisms or receptions of *DRN*) that because *DRN* exploded onto the literary scene after its rediscovery in the fifteenth century following a long period of relative obscurity, its lyric poetics is particularly early modern.

Liza Blake, University of Toronto

A Thousand Lines of Non-Linear Poetry:
Reading Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*, Part I

In 1653, Margaret Cavendish, published a book of poems entitled *Poems and Fancies*. The first part of this edition contains a fragmented, atomized treatise of natural philosophy, including a number of short, combinable poems about the three principles of nature: matter, motion, and figure or form. By the 1660s, when Cavendish returned to England after the Civil War and caught up on natural philosophical reading, she had abandoned ideas of atomism, developing a vitalist monist theory of matter and nature; nevertheless, she completed a comprehensive rearrangement and revision of her earlier work, reprinting them in 1664 and again in 1668.

Cavendish's short atom poems are difficult to read as a species of lyric. She almost never uses the first person singular pronoun, and poems frequently trail off rather than working towards a conclusion or volta. But I argue that the unusual nature of her poetry is not (as some have thought) a sign of poor poetic construction, but is an attempt to think through ideas of non-linearity and arrangement. Arrangement, a central concept in ancient and early modern atomism, defined Cavendish's atomistic poetics: each poem is not a stand-alone, self-complete, well-wrought urn, but is a tile that can be rearranged into different mosaics of thought. Understanding Cavendish's poetics, therefore, and learning to read her particular brand of poetry (whether or not we consider it to be lyric) necessarily involves an understanding of her physics, her philosophy of nature. In this paper, I therefore sketch the relationship between Cavendish's natural philosophy and her poetics, and reflect on what the experience of reading of Cavendish's atomistic poetry might do to our broader conversations about reading lyric.

Lauren Shohet, Villanova University
Reading the shield of Achilles: ekphrasis, re-mediation, history

This paper considers a specific kind of lyric reading: how we read ekphrasis, the verbal representation of visual art that I understand also in an extended sense that also includes description of imagined paintings (Hollander's "notional ekphrasis") and the verbal representation of terpsichorean and musical endeavor. I start with what I understand to be the originary instance of ekphrasis in western literature, Homer's Shield of Achilles, which I read in relation to adaptations in Virgil's shield of Aeneas, and Milton's twinned borrowings in *Paradise Lost* for both the "ponderous shield" of Satan (1. 284) and the twinned scenes of bellicose and pacific cities (11.638ff) that directly stage for Adam what the Classical shields mediated in metalwork. Deployments of the shield trope characteristically pick up on the *Iliad*'s and the *Aeneid*'s periodic return to the scene of making. Detailing the process and choices of the divine craftsmen Hephaestos and Vulcan, the classical versions limn an artisinal self-reflection that becomes incorporated into the topos. I want to ask, then, about two aspects of ekphrastic allusion and the shield. First, what are the affordances or resistances of ekphrasis for representing (or eliding) historically specific experience on the one hand, generic continuity on the other? And second, what are the affordances of the static particular to

ekphrasis: what becomes meaningful when representation snags on the mismatches between smell and sight, touch and word, dance and engraving? More broadly, what questions does this pose about whether ekphrastic poetics and contemporary theories of re-mediation might illuminate one another? The questions come together when allusion comes to seem a temporal version of re-mediation: a rearticulation in an inherently mismatched framework -- different media for ekphrasis, different iterative moments for allusion -- that inevitably crops out some of the original, but fortuitously thickens or illuminates other elements.

Reading Auerbach Reading Marvell
Christopher Warley

The first line of Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" appears on the title page of the first edition of Auerbach's *Mimesis* (it's position varies in subsequent editions and translations). It is not clear where Auerbach found Marvell's poem (only pronounced as Marvell's *capolavoro* in the 1920s by T. S. Eliot), and Auerbach writes not a single word about Marvell in the rest of the book. I am going to suggest that in a work famous for the quotations that begin most chapters, for the patient explication of those passages, and for the subsequent unfolding of an entire worldview out of those explications, the first line of "To His Coy Mistress" is the *Ausgangspunkt* for *Mimesis* itself. Marvell's poem introduces much of Auerbach's argument—the peculiar entwinement of world and time, the question of sufficiency, the difficult problem of who "we" are. And it links these questions to Renaissance literature and its intimate entwining of aesthetics and historicism, which serve as a figure for Auerbach's entire project.

From Book to Song: The Lyric Ontology of Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalamion*
Danila Sokolov
In this paper I am interested in how Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* explores the ontological tension that characterizes poetry in the age of print: that between poetry as corporeal (vocal) performance and poetry as a material artifact (book). I hope to suggest that by gradually enfeebling the imagery of the book and by deconstructing the principal apparatus of book organization (the security of beginning and ending, the organic unity of constituent parts, the linearity of reading experience), Spenser's sequence exploits the misalignment between the energies of poetic voice and the final product of poetic labor. This produces a work of art in which the speculative limits of the lyric and the material limits of the book do not coincide, which in turn conditions a reading protocol based on corporeal engagement with the book's materiality.

Ruth Kaplan, "Reading Thomas Wyatt's Worst Poem"
One of the many difficulties of reading and writing about Thomas Wyatt's lyric poetry is the gap between the poems that seem to translate effortlessly to our world and those that don't – the gap between, say, "They Flee from Me," one of Wyatt's most-anthologized poems, and "In Spayne," his most maligned. I join a number of critics who recontextualize Wyatt's poetry in an attempt to understand its wide range. Where others have located the poetry in its biographical, social, and material contexts, however, my SAA paper attempts to recover interpretive contexts that can help us see what kinds of innovations Wyatt's readers might have found in his poetry at the time. Although attention of late has focused on the courtly circles in which his poems traveled, and the forms of reading prevalent there, I focus on other contemporary models of reading that Wyatt might have anticipated: commonplacing and allegoresis. Wyatt's frequent use of proverbs, his rare use of mythological allusions: both suggest his courting of predictable forms of reading at the time. Against that backdrop, his deviations become more

remarkable, and we can more clearly see that Wyatt's signature move, in both his most and least "successful" poems, is to sidestep moral closure and replace it with affective force.