

## Cambridge Poets Through the Ages: John Donne to J.H. Prynne

### Overview:

In the eight hundred years since the founding of the University of Cambridge, an extraordinary number of literary thinkers have passed through and made their mark on the city, whether as students, lecturers, visitors or residents. This course will focus on a selection of poets who studied or worked in Cambridge, and will consider some of the ways in which the city and the university of their time influenced their work, as well as how their work influenced the vibrant intellectual community we have inherited. Starting with some of the most celebrated names in the English literary canon, we will move through the centuries to poets still living and writing in Cambridge today.

Each class will begin with a brief talk on the topic at hand, in the style of a lecture, offering biographical, geographical, political or religious context. This will be followed by group analysis of poems, in the format of a classic Cambridge practical criticism class, and further discussion of the kind usually conducted in a seminar. Poems and passages to be considered will be supplied during the sessions. Students might wish to read or look at the works of some of the poets mentioned in advance, but there will be no expectation that anyone has already read widely in any of these areas of literary history.

### Outline:

1.	Donne and Herbert	Devotional poetry in the seventeenth century
2.	Milton and Marvell	Poetry, politics and the English Civil War (1642-1651)
3.	Wordsworth and Tennyson	Cambridge and Romanticism
4.	Brooke and Empson	Poetry in Cambridge in the early twentieth century, and the rise of the study of English
5.	Prynne and beyond	Poetry in Cambridge today

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