

## **Abstract**

The aim of the thesis is straightforward: to provide readers with a glimpse into the life of Elizabeth Bishop but not to put emphasis on biographical details. The focus lies on her two most formative relationships with her fellow poets, namely Marianne Moore and Robert Lowell. The thesis aims to present five selected poems and to read them with acknowledging the mutual influences and, at the same time, it strives to provide specific instances of such influences.

The first part of the thesis is dedicated to the relationship with Marianne Moore. The two poets met during Bishop's Vassar years and their friendship lasted until Moore's death in 1972. From the teacher – mentored paradigm, their friendship evolved into an affectionate companionship. The thesis introduces their relationship while using selected letters, interviews and, to illustrate the matters more clearly, two of Bishop's poems, "The Roosters" and "Invitation to Miss Marianne Moore." The first poem captures the breaking free from Moore's direct influence and additionally serves as a link to the second part of the thesis. The later poem is used to illustrate their reconciliation and to present the milestone that marks the shift of paradigms.

The second part of the thesis presents Robert Lowell, who is the already mentioned link between these two chapters; it was him who helped Bishop to embrace her new poetic style and who might have inspired Bishop to write "Invitation to Miss Marianne Moore." Notwithstanding, his influence on Bishop's poetry was more profound and in order to illustrate how meeting him and reading him shaped Bishop herself, the poem "In the Waiting Room" was selected for closer analysis. The poem bears visible traces of both Moore's and Lowell's style, descriptivism and confessionalism, both of which are key aspects to understanding what constitutes what we see under the name "Elizabeth Bishop."

Nevertheless, Bishop's influence on Lowell was more pronounced than hers on Moore, hence one must pay attention to the reciprocity visible in "The Armadillo" and "Skunk Hour."

Lowell's "Skunk Hour" was modelled on Bishop's "The Armadillo" and it drew from Bishop's use of rhythm and verse. Lowell himself confessed that it was "The Armadillo" that made him avert his focus from rigid poetry, hence he started to focus on what will later be known as "confessional poetry." As their debts were always two-way, the thesis deals with the aspect of protest. Robert Lowell was a conscientious objector and perhaps it was his principles that made Bishop more vocal about her stances. The chapter is held together by selected excerpts from their letters that have great artistic value and that would deserve more attention.

In the elegy called "North Haven," Bishop is bidding farewell to her "sad friend" and at the same time the homage serves as a closing line after the years of their warm and formative friendship. Undoubtedly, there were many ups and downs, but no feelings of malice remained, only the bitter aftertaste of outliving your best friend. One can only hope that the memories of the discussed relationship put a smile on Bishop's face in the two remaining years she lived.