

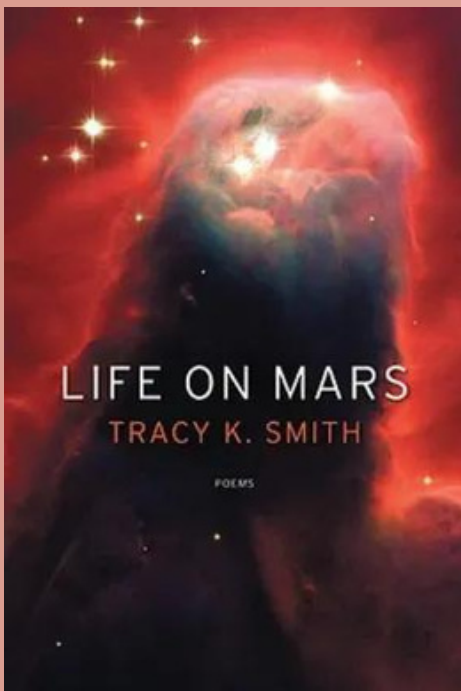
Does Reading Poetry Make Life Better?

Uses of Literature and *Life on Mars*

FACILITATOR: DR. DENA FEHRENBACHER

Reading poetry (and literature broadly) doesn't make us better people; it doesn't necessarily reveal the secrets to living well; and it doesn't even provide accurate information about the world or the experience of others. Sometimes it is enjoyable to read – but just as frequently it doesn't bring pleasure, peace, or anything else. What is the use, then, of poetry in a life well-lived?

The first session of this seminar will survey theories of literature as they relate to understandings of “the good life”—theories of how literature can and can't make us more ethical, happier, smarter, or more personally fulfilled. In the second session, we will examine some of these arguments in relation to poems in Tracy K. Smith's collection, *Life on Mars*. Across both weeks, we will consider how poetry productively challenges our search for “useful” tools and technologies for achieving happiness.



SEMINAR

#1

Monday, February 6
6:30pm-8:00pm

#2

Monday, February 13
6:30pm-8:00pm

Location: Berkeley Institute (2134 Allston Way, 2nd floor)



For more information and to register for this seminar, scan the QR code or visit <https://www.binst.org/uses-of-literature-and-life-on-mars>.