There is no science without fancy, no art without facts.

—Nabokov

This is a course in which we will read, critique and write lyric essays. The lyric essay is a hybrid form of writing that does not respect the boundaries of genre. It mixes facts with fancy, or put another way, fact with fiction. Thus, it is sometimes called ‘creative non-fiction.’ I prefer the term, ‘lyrical essay,’ because it suggests the need for facts or experiences to ‘sing,’ and the notion that there is something special about explanations and analyses that ‘sing’ rather than merely ‘telling’ or ‘showing.’ Not everyone likes the lyric essay, whether as form or appellation. For some critics, the lyric essay seems an excuse to be muddled, to be disorganized. It seems to harbing the end of ‘literary civilization’ as we have known it: poems are poems, and novels are novels, and short stories are little made-up things, and journalism is carefully and objectively reported and verifiable events, and so on. Lyric essays set out to mess around at the borders of these discrete forms of writing. This kind of irreverence can be badly done, yes. We will explore how and when that happens. And we will also account for what makes this type of writing so intriguing to a growing legion of readers today.