



Introduction to Campbell McGrath. 1:39 min. Video montage: Jade Cheek.

A Video Conversation with Poet Campbell McGrath

By Elman + Cheek

Campbell McGrath grew up in Washington, D.C., where he attended Sidwell Friends School. He received his B.A. from the University of Chicago in 1984 and his MFA from Columbia University's creative writing program in 1988. He currently lives in Miami Beach, Florida, and teaches creative writing at Florida International University.

McGrath has been recognized by some of the most prestigious American poetry awards, including the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award (for "Spring Comes to Chicago", his third book of poems), a Pushcart Prize, the Academy of American Poets Prize, a Ploughshares Cohen Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Witter Bynner Fellowship from the Library of Congress, and a MacArthur Foundation "Genius Award." In 2011 he was named a Fellow of United States Artists. In 2017 McGrath was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry.

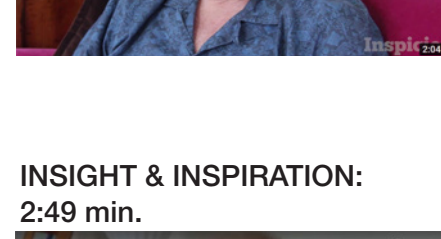
While primarily known as a poet, McGrath has also written a play, "The Autobiography of Edvard Munch" (produced by Concrete Gothic Theater, Chicago, 1983); a libretto for Orlando Garcia's experimental video opera "Transcending Time" (premiered at the New Music Biennale, Zagreb, Croatia, 2009); collaborated with John Stuart on the video/poetry piece "14 Views of Miami" (premiered at The Wolfsonian, Miami, 2008); and translated the Aristophanes play The Wasps for the Penn Greek Drama Series.

The videos below are organized by topic and run between 60 seconds and 7 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 1:25 min.

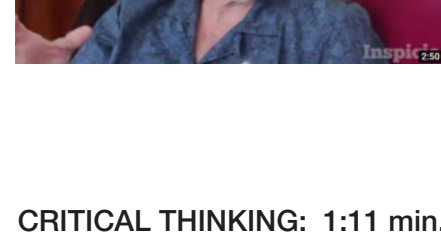


Where did you grow up and what was your earliest memory of art in any form?



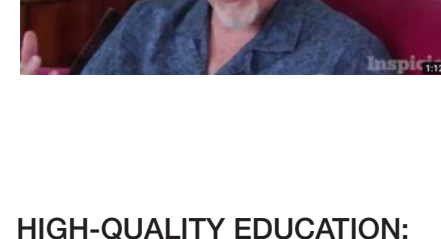
SELF-CONFIDENCE: 2:03 min.

Do you remember when you first started to feel passionate about writing and why?



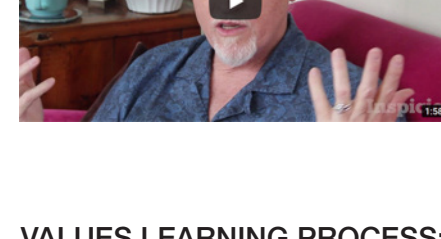
INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 2:49 min.

Was there a moment when you decided to start writing poetry?



CRITICAL THINKING: 1:11 min.

You describe the joy of creating poetry in a free-flowing manner, yet some poets recount laboring over three lines for a month.



HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION: 1:57 min.

What was your experience at the Sidwell Friends school, and what impact did it have on your career as a poet?



VALUES LEARNING PROCESS: 2:43 min.

What did you learn at the University of Chicago and Columbia University that still informs you today?



SELF-CONFIDENCE: 5:21 min.

How do you characterize the evolution of your career?



INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 3:31 min.

Your willingness to explore new forms reminds me of Picasso and the many paths he pursued. Do you think your wide range of interests is part of your authenticity?



UNDERSTANDS THE AUDIENCE'S PERSPECTIVE: 4:06 sec.

I like that most of your poems are accessible to most people. How do you define the audience that you want to reach with your poems?



CRITICAL THINKING: 1:26 min.

I remember seeing writers like Jack Kerouac read poems on Steve Allen's original "Tonight Show." When was the last time a poet read on a late night talk show?



COMMUNITY VALUES: 2:18 min.

Discuss the impact of The Betsy Hotel on poetry in South Florida.



SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 3:06 min.

How did moving to Miami change your life and poetry?



UNDERSTANDS THE AUDIENCE'S PERSPECTIVE: 2:05 min.

You see and understand the "technical" framework of poetry like a musician understands a music score. How does that translate to music lovers who can't "read" music, and poetry readers who don't understand the devices of poetry?



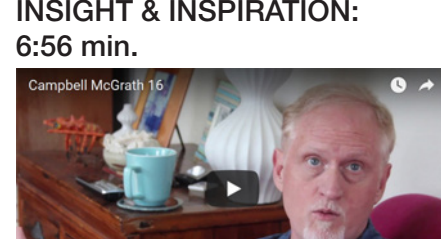
CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 3:35 min.

Which of the notable awards you received effected your career the most?



CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 1:23 min.

Is there room for humor in poetry?



INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 6:56 min.

Describe "XX: Poems for the Twentieth Century" and how the concept evolved.



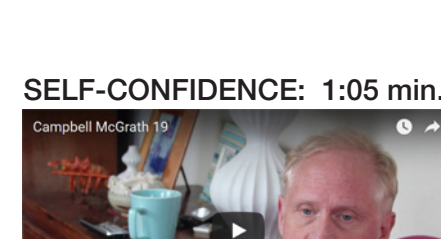
INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 2:02 min.

Do you consider concept development to be one of your biggest strengths?



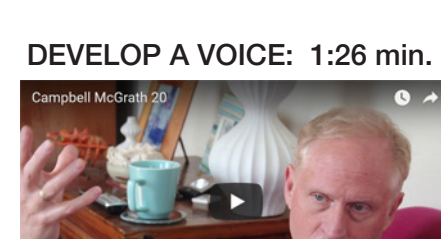
COLLABORATOR vs SOLE CONTRIBUTOR: 1:47 min.

Describe your play, "The Autobiography of Edward Munch," and how writing a play compared with writing poetry.



SELF-CONFIDENCE: 1:05 min.

Unlike other forms of writing, poetry rarely gets edited.



DEVELOP A VOICE: 1:26 min.

What are your thoughts about poetry readings?



THINKS OUTSIDE THE BOX: 2:21 min.

Why aren't most poets interested in having their poems used as lyrics for music?



INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:
3:50 min.



What projects are you currently working on?

PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS:
1:26 min



Describe a challenging situation with a successful outcome.

COMMUNITY VALUES:
1:41 min.



What do you find most interesting about the Miami literary community?