

**Creative Writing 1**  
**Mrs. Rothbard**  
**“Creed” Assignment**

After reading Meg Kearney’s “Creed,” write your own “Creed” poem. You might begin by freewriting – a stream-of-consciousness sort of writing, beginning with “I believe...” Try to incorporate some of the wonderful twists and turns as Kearney does in her poem – here are a few (there are lots to choose from!):

- Include specifics – the more CONCRETE the better (for example: “the best bagels in New York / are boiled and baked on the corner / of first and 21<sup>st</sup>.”)
- Notice how Kearney gets away with including abstractions only *because they are juxtaposed with specifics*. (for example: “I believe in God, and if you hold / the door and carry my books, I’ll be sure / to ask for your name...” If she’d just written “I believe in God,” it wouldn’t have any punch.
- Let things connect in surprising ways. For example:

. ..Not because of superstition, but  
because that’s not how life **works**.  
I believe in **work**: phone calls, typing,  
multiplying—black coffee, write write  
write, dig dig dig, **sweep, sweep**.  
I believe in a slow, torturous **sweep**  
of tongue down the lover’s belly;  
I believe I’ve been **swept** off my feet  
more than once, and it’s a good idea  
not to **name names**. Digging for **names**...

Notice how she writes “works” which leads to “work” (moving from verb to noun); and how “sweep, sweep” (as in cleaning) leads to a very different kind of “sweep” which then leads to “swept” in a whole new context; and how “name names” triggers the idea of “Digging for names.”

- Try to include some thing or things you *don’t* believe (as Kearney does: “I don’t believe in goodbyes.”)
- You might include a story (as she does about her father).
- Try to end in a surprising way, as Kearney does.
- Also, note how Kearney doesn’t begin every line with “I believe” – you also should strive for more surprising line breaks and structure.

## Creed

I believe the chicken before the egg  
though I believe in the egg. I believe  
eating is a form of touch  
carried to the bitter end. I believe  
chocolate is good for you. I believe  
I'm a lefty in a right-handed world,  
which does not make me gauche,  
or abnormal, or sinister. I believe  
"normal" is just a cycle on the washing  
machine. I believe the touch of hands  
has the power to heal, though nothing  
will ever fill this immeasurable hole  
in the center of my chest. I believe in  
kissing, I believe in mail, I believe  
in salt over the shoulder, a watched pot  
never boils, and if I sit by my mailbox  
waiting for the letter I want, it will never  
arrive. Not because of superstition, but  
because that's not how life works.  
I believe in work: phone calls, typing,  
multiplying—black coffee, write write  
write, dig dig dig, sweep, sweep.  
I believe in a slow, torturous sweep  
of tongue down the lover's belly;  
I believe I've been swept off my feet  
more than once, and it's a good idea  
not to name names. Digging for names  
is part of my work, but that's a different  
poem. I believe there's a difference  
between men and women, and I thank God  
for it. I believe in God, and if you hold  
the door and carry my books, I'll be sure  
to ask for your name. What is your name?  
Do you believe in ghosts? I believe  
the morning my father died I heard him  
whistling "Danny Boy" in the bathroom  
and a week later, saw him standing  
in the living room with a suit case  
in his hand. We never got to say goodbye,  
he said, and I said, I don't believe in  
goodbyes. I believe that's why I have  
this hole in my chest: sometimes it's  
rabid, sometimes it's incoherent.  
I believe I'll survive. I believe early

to bed and early to rise is a boring  
way to live. I believe good poets borrow,  
great poets steal, and if only we'd stop  
trying to be happy, we could have a pretty  
good time. I believe time doesn't heal  
all wounds; I believe in getting flowers  
for no reason; I believe "Give a Hoot,  
Don't Pollute," "Reading is Fundamental,"  
Yankee Stadium belongs in the Bronx,  
and the best bagels in New York  
are boiled and baked on the corner  
of first and 21st. I believe in Santa Claus,  
Jimmy Stewart—Zuzu's petals—Arbor  
Day, and that ugly baby I keep dreaming  
about. She lives inside me, opening  
and closing her wide mouth. I believe  
she will never taste her mother's milk,  
she will never be beautiful, she will always  
wonder what it's like to be born, and if  
you hold your hand right here—touch me,  
right, here, as if this is all that matters,  
this is all you ever wanted, I believe  
something might move inside me,  
and it would be more than I could stand.

~Meg Kearney