

## ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Newt Gingrich at the Zoo.

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Sparked by a McKay Coppins article in *The Atlantic* on the former Speaker of the House and his effect on politics in the United States, *Newt Gingrich at the Zoo* explores issues including masculinity, family, and power through poems presenting various personae. Taking influence from Louise Glück, John Berryman, James Wright, W.S. Merwin, and Walt Whitman (among others) both formally and stylistically, the poems vary in perspective between versions of Gingrich himself, the denizens of the zoo that he observes (engaging with the poetic tradition of *ekphrasis*) and even inanimate parts of the zoo to provide a complex view of the relationship between man and nature, the American political landscape, and masculinity through the lens of Gingrich. Utilizing the zoo as a liminal space, the poems blur the edges between the various speakers, taking Newt through an emotional journey that ends with Newt returning to a child-like state. Invaluable research for this project was undertaken by way of several visits to the Indianapolis Zoo to observe the animals and the zoo itself. This research was made possible through the generosity of the Patricia and Anthony Martone Fund, which selected this project as a grant recipient for the 2020-2021 school year. While intended to be a cohesive project, this version of *Newt Gingrich at the Zoo* should not be considered a completed work. Instead, it stands as a first section for a potential larger manuscript.