

## [Staff Picks: Reaching for the Moon](#)

[view in catalog](#)



Reviewed by Cassie R., Materials Handler

*Reaching for the Moon* is available to check out as a DVD and [to stream on Kanopy](#).

# Lifelong Learning



*Reaching For the Moon* is a 2013 biographical drama directed by Bruno Barreto, based on the book *Flores Raras e Banalíssimas* (Rare and Commonplace Flowers) by Carmem Lucia de Oliveira. The story focuses on the iconic American poet, Elizabeth Bishop, and one of her romantic affairs with Brazilian architect, Lota de Macedo Soares between 1951 and 1967. Set largely in Petrópolis, the film recounts Bishop's passion for writing, her apprehensive take on love, and her dramatic life, while in Brazil with Lota.

The story begins with Elizabeth in New York with her friend and fellow writer Robert Lowell, editing her poem "One Art." Elizabeth is played frigidly, appearing to us as a desolate and uninspired writer in desperate need for change. This sense of monotony is what ultimately leads Elizabeth to visit her former classmate, Mary and her girlfriend at the time, Lota! Initially, Elizabeth is reserved and callous to the locals in Rio, and Lota herself. She felt out of place, judgmental, somehow fierce & fragile, all at the same time. As a longtime fan of Elizabeth, it surprised me to see someone I love depicted so cruelly, but even in the film, Elizabeth says "maybe this is why people shouldn't meet authors."

As the movie continues viewers see Elizabeth soften, and begin integrating into life in Brazil, a life of partnership, and success as she wins the Pulitzer Prize. The movie flashes back to scenes of Elizabeth's childhood, highlighting her fear of rejection and abandonment, and enlightening the audience to some of her more rigid characteristics and heavy alcoholism that plagues her and her relationship throughout the film. The film also briefly explores Lota and her work as an architect designing Flamengo Park and her struggles with mental health that eventually resulted in her suicide. The film is a cinematic memoir that beautifully combines the poetry of Bishop and her unique voice with a raw display of humanity, sexuality, and grief.

*This is review is part of the [Finding Value series](#), inspired by the eleven core values central to the Library's mission. Tune in as Library staff review books and movies that highlight the values accessibility, civil discourse, inclusiveness, integrity, intellectual freedom, lifelong learning, literacy, respect, safety, service, and stewardship.*

Posted by Aubrey D. on July 9, 2020 [Think Library](#)

[Adults](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Finding Value](#)

[LGBTQ](#)

[Lifelong Learning](#)

[TV & Movies](#)

[Reaching for the Moon](#)

[Support the Library](#)

[Employment](#)

[Library Budget](#)

[Wireless Printing](#)

[Monroe County Public Library](#) | [812-349-3050](#)

303 E. Kirkwood Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47408

[Ellettsville Branch](#) | [812-876-1272](#)

600 West Temperance Street, Ellettsville, IN 47429

chat loading...

```
(function() { var x = document.createElement("script"); x.type = "text/javascript"; x.async = true; x.src = (document.location.protocol === "https:" ? "https://" : "http://") + "libraryh3lp.com/js/libraryh3lp.js?14734"; var y = document.getElementsByTagName("script")[0]; y.parentNode.insertBefore(x, y); })();
```

[Subscribe to our newsletters](#)