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## APPENDIX

### Author's Biography



**Mary Oliver** was born and raised in Maple Hills Heights, a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. She would retreat from a difficult home to the nearby woods, where she would build huts of sticks and grass and write poems. She attended both Ohio State University and Vassar College, but did not receive a degree from either institution. As a young poet, Oliver was deeply influenced by Edna St. Vincent Millay and briefly lived in Millay's home, helping Norma Millay organize her sister's papers. Oliver is notoriously reticent about her private life, but it was during this period that she met her long-time partner, Molly Malone Cook. The couple moved to Provincetown, Massachusetts, and the surrounding Cape Cod landscape has had a marked influence on Oliver's work. Known for its clear and poignant observations and evocative use of the natural world, Oliver's poetry is firmly rooted in place and the Romantic nature tradition. Her work received early critical attention; *American Primitive* (1983), her fifth book, won the Pulitzer Prize.

*Dream Work* (1986) continues Oliver's search to "understand both the wonder and pain of nature" according to Prado in a later review for the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. The transition from engaging the natural world to engaging more personal realms was also evident in *New and Selected Poems* (1992), which won the National Book Award. The volume contains poems from eight of Oliver's previous volumes as well as previously unpublished, newer work.

Oliver continued her celebration of the natural world in her next collections, including *Winter Hours: Prose, Prose Poems, and Poems* (1999), *Why I Wake Early* (2004), *New and Selected Poems, Volume 2* (2004), and *Swan: Poems and Prose Poems* (2010). A prolific writer of both poetry and prose, Oliver routinely published a new book every year or two. Her main themes continue to be the intersection between the human and the natural world, as well as the limits of human consciousness and language in articulating such a meeting. At its most intense, her poetry aims to peer beneath the constructions of culture and reason that burden us with an alienated consciousness to celebrate primitive and mystical visions. Her last books included *A Thousand Mornings* (2012), *Dog Songs* (2013), *Blue Horses* (2014), *Felicity* (2015), *Upstreams: Selected Essays* (2016), and *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver* (2017).

Mary Oliver held the Catharine Osgood Foster Chair for Distinguished Teaching at Bennington College until 2001. In addition to such major awards as the Pulitzer and National Book Award, Oliver received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She also won the American Academy of Arts & Letters Award, the Poetry Society of America's Shelley Memorial Prize and Alice Fay di Castagnola Award. Oliver lived in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and Hobe Sound, Florida, until her death in early 2019. She was 83.

Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/mary-oliver>, accessed on Juni 4, 2023.

## Selected Poems of Mary Oliver

### 1. *Morning Poem*

Every morning  
the world  
is created.  
Under the orange

sticks of the sun  
the heaped  
ashes of the night  
turn into leaves again

and fasten themselves to the high branches—  
and the ponds appear  
like black cloth  
on which are painted islands

of summer lilies.  
If it is your nature  
to be happy  
you will swim away along the soft trails

for hours, your imagination  
alighting everywhere.  
And if your spirit  
carries within it

the thorn  
that is heavier than lead—  
if it's all you can do  
to keep on trudging—

there is still  
somewhere deep within you  
a beast shouting that the earth  
is exactly what it wanted—

each pond with its blazing lilies  
is a prayer heard and answered  
lavishly,  
every morning,

whether or not  
you have ever dared to be happy,  
whether or not  
you have ever dared to pray.

2. *Little Owl Who Lives in the Orchard*

His beak could open a bottle,  
and his eyes-when he lifts their soft lids-  
go on reading something  
just beyond your shoulder-  
Blake, maybe,  
or tge Book of Revelation.

Never mind that he eats only  
The black-smocked crickets,  
and the dragonflies if they happen  
to be out late over the ponds, and of course  
the occasional festal mouse.  
Never mind that he is only a memo  
from the offices of fear-

It's not size but surge that tells us  
when we're in touch with something real,  
and when I hear him in the orchard fluttering  
down the aluminum  
ladder of his scream-  
when I see his wings open, like two black ferns,

a flurry of palpitations  
as cold as sleet  
rackets across the marshlands  
of my heart  
like a wild spring day.

Somewhere in the universe,  
in the gallery of important things,  
the babyish owl, ruffled and rakish,  
sits on its pedestal.  
Dear, dark dapple of plush!  
A message, reads the label,  
from that mysterious conglomerate:  
Oblivion and Co.  
The hooked head stares  
from its house of dark, feathery lace.  
It could be a valentine.

**3.     *The Summer Day***

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean-

the one who has flung herself out the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is .

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at the last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?