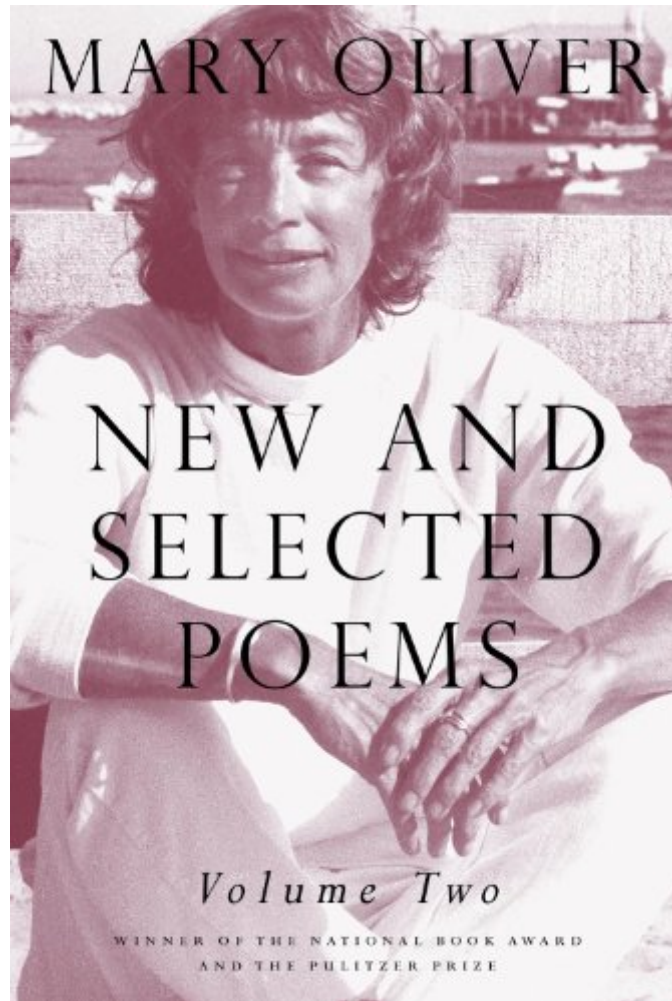


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New And Selected Poems, Volume Two



Synopsis

Mary Oliver has been writing poetry for nearly five decades, and in that time she has become America's foremost poetic voice on our experience of the physical world. This collection presents forty-two new poems-an entire volume in itself-along with works chosen by Oliver from six of the books she has published since *New and Selected Poems, Volume One*.

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Customer Reviews

Mary Oliver is living proof that poetry is not something that was invented, rather something that has been present since creation, in us and in nature, waiting to be discovered. And for the last thirty years Mary Oliver has not so much written poetry, but searched for, and discovered, the poetry that has existed in the world all along. It is, of course, much more complicated than that. Oliver's poetry is crafted with delicate, precise language. She lays her words out lazily across the page, often breaking the poem into three or four beat lines, letting a metaphor string out through an entire stanza. It is her imagery, her close observance of the world, that leads to the "ideas" in her poems. There is a moment in nearly all of her poems where the speaker moves from the exterior to the interior, from the water-lily cracking open to the creases in the human heart. What makes her poetry

work is that none of this seems forced. It is as if she is taking the reader by the hand and saying, "Look! The sun is rising. Watch it with me for a moment and we'll decide for ourselves why it rises. For certainly, it must have its reasons."

I have about 5 of her poetry books. I feel that her poetry has gotten more and more beautiful over time, and believe that this collection is better than Volume 1. Mary Oliver is definitely my favorite poet - much of her writing is about a thirst for growth and spirituality, and finding peace in nature and love (friendships and relationships). I have given this book to a number of friends, who are also touched by her gift of expressing the unexpressable. Some of my favorite poems in this book: the Percy series (her dog), Why I Wake Early, and The Whistler. My other favorite book of Mary Oliver poems is her most recent one: "Thirst". It deals with grief at the loss of her long-time partner and is quite beautiful. For those looking for a really good book of poems in general, I *definitely* recommend "Good Poems," compiled by Garrison Keillor; and "Risking Everything: 110 Poems of Love and Redemption" compiled by Roger Housden. Enjoy!

Mary Oliver's poems are masterful creations that resonate in my mind and heart each time I read them. Her language is soulful; her imagery brilliant. She is a master craftsman who builds each poem precisely. Her poems talk of so many things in the natural world; she distills each to its barest essence and allows us the enjoyment of sharing it; I always feel as though she invites me to come along to discover these sacred sights and insights found in nature. The poems in this collection explore and reveal the essence of fireflies, moss, the stars, the toad, the owl, Daisies, beans, the cricket, the Black Bear, the seasons, Blackwater (a place), the Soul and many other creatures and their habitats. She is a sublime poet of the natural world and this collection is superb! I recommend it to anyone!

Mary Oliver writes consistently moving, earthy poetry that reaches deep into what it means to live. I find her work magical, especially the way her writing about natural phenomena and animal relationships means so much to actual interactions with people. What's wonderful here is that Mary Oliver writes about the meta-story of human experience. Instead of delivering the poignancy of a personal story of romance, tragedy or success in the personal sphere, Oliver takes an image from nature and her experience with nature and weaves a story that has relevance for all people, no matter their cultural background. This writing could inspire the leaders of our civilization just as much as it could inspire tribal chiefs of aboriginal people. For example: Sunrise You can die for it--an

idea, or the world. People have done so, brilliantly, letting their small bodies be bound to the stake, creating an unforgettable fury of light. But this morning, climbing the familiar hills in the familiar fabric of dawn, I thought of China, and India and Europe, and I thought how the sun blazes for everyone just so joyfully as it rises under the lashes of my own eyes, and I thought I am so many! What is my name? What is the name of the deep breath I would take over and over for all of us? Call it whatever you want, it is happiness, and it is another one of the ways to enter fire.

The Pulitzer Prize winning poet, Mary Oliver, finishes her poem, "What Have I Learned So Far" with the line, 'Be ignited, or be gone.' To me, this conveys the passion she brings to life and poetry. What comes through clearly in her poems is her reverence for nature. *New and Selected Poems, Volume Two*, is a moving collection of her past works combined with many new poems. There is a Zen-ness that permeates her work. Haiku like parsimony with no embellishment. Nature does not need anything extra. For example, writing about what she saw after a storm - And this detail: the body of a duck, a golden-eye; and beside it one black-backed gull. In the body of the duck, among the breast feathers, a hole perhaps an inch across; the color within the hole a shouting red. And bend it as you might, nothing was to blame: storms must toss, and the great black-backed gawker must eat, and so on. It was merely a moment. I recently saw Mary Oliver at the 92nd Street 'Y' in New York City where she was reading from this collection. See her if you can. She reads as she writes, with dignity and with passion and wisdom. This is an extraordinary collection of poems.

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