



## Dream Work

By Mary Oliver

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### Dream Work By Mary Oliver

*Dream Work*, a collection of forty-five poems, follows both chronologically and logically Mary Oliver's *American Primitive*, which won her the Pulitzer Prize for the finest book of poetry published in 1983 by an American poet. The depth and diversity of perceptual awareness—so steadfast and radiant in *American Primitive*—continue in *Dream Work*. She has turned her attention in these poems to the solitary and difficult labors of the spirit—to accepting the truth about one's personal world, and to valuing the triumphs while transcending the failures of human relationships.

Whether by way of inheritance—as in her poem about the Holocaust—or through a painful glimpse into the present—as in "Acid," a poem about an injured boy begging in the streets of Indonesia—the events and tendencies of history take on a new importance here. More deeply than in her previous volumes, the sensibility behind these poems has merged with the world. Mary Oliver's willingness to be joyful continues, deepened by self-awareness, by experience, and by choice.

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## **Dream Work** By Mary Oliver Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In the making of her poems, Oliver wields the most delicate of instruments: precision similes and astonishing metaphors. Though *Dream Work*, her seventh book, is somewhat less successful than *Twelve Moons* or *American Primitive*, which won the 1984 Pulitzer Prize, few lyric voices can match hers in paying homage to the natural world. Yet, her "dream works" can be palpably tragic. Inured to the absence of her estranged father ("Rage" and "A Visitor"), Oliver "saw what love might have done had we loved in time." And "Members of the Tribe" is a remarkable address to artists and poets on death and art. There are still too many echoes of James Wright in her work—references to body, blessing, blossom, and bone. But that is a minor demerit against one who is developing into a major poet. J.P. Lewis, Integrative Studies Dept., Otterbein Coll., Westerville, Ohio  
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## Review

"Her poems are wonderingly perceptive and strongly written, but beyond that they are a spirited, expressive meditation on the impossibilities of what we call lives, and on the gratifications of change." —Hayden Carruth

"Oliver's poems are thoroughly convincing—as genuine, moving, and implausible as the first caressing breeze of spring." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"One of the astonishing aspects of [Oliver's] work is the consistency of tone over this long period. What changes is an increased focus on nature and an increased precision with language that has made her one of our very best poets. . . . These poems sustain us rather than divert us. Although few poets have fewer human beings in their poems than Mary Oliver, it is ironic that few poets also go so far to help us forward." —Stephen Dobyns, *The New York Times Book Review*

From the Inside Flap

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry

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Whether by way of inheritance—as in her poems about the Holocaust—or through a painful glimpse into the present—as in "Acid," a poem about an injured boy begging in the streets of Indonesia—the events and tendencies of history take on a new importance also. More deeply than in her previous volumes, the sensibility behind these poems has merged with the world. Mary Oliver's willingness to be joyful continues, deepened by self-awareness, by experience, and by choice.

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meditation on the impossibilities of what we call lives, and on the gratifications of change."--Hayden Carruth

Mary Oliver was born in 1935 in Cleveland, Ohio. Among the awards and prizes she has received are the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Shelley Memorial Award, a Guggenheim, and an American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Achievement Award. Her collection of poetry *American Primitive* received the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and *New and Selected Poems* received a National Book Award in 1992. Ms. Oliver has served on the faculties of Case Western Reserve, Bucknell, the University of Cincinnati, Sweet Briar College, and Duke University. She currently lives in Provincetown, Massachusetts and teaches literature at Bennington College.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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#### **Mary Alejandro:**

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