



New and Selected Poems

By Mary Oliver

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Winner of the 1992 National Book Award for Poetry

A New York Times Notable Book of the Year 1993

"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

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New and Selected Poems By Mary Oliver Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1119120 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Beacon Press
- Published on: 1992-09-23
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .0" h x .0" w x .0" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 255 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

As Diane Wakoski has noted, the power of Mary Oliver's Frost-influenced pastoral writing is in her ability to cast a spell, to create "the illusion that the natural world is graspable." Oliver's fierce independence, beautiful imagery, and love and knowledge of the natural world are all driven by a searching mind, expressed in poems that make for good company. In *Some Questions You Might Ask*, Oliver gives us this one to chew over: "Is the soul solid, like iron?/ or is it tender and breakable, like/ the wings of a moth in the beak of an owl?" Highly recommended.

From Publishers Weekly

This collection brings together poetry from eight of Oliver's previously published books and 30 new poems. In all of her work, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning *American Primitive*, Oliver, "full of curiosity," writes about the natural world, engaging the entwined processes of life and death. "Amazement" figures in her persistent attention to things seen: "If you notice anything / it leads you to notice / more / and more." Description then leads to meditation, a leap beyond the material world. Fundamentally religious in impulse, many of the poems move quickly away from concrete description. Metaphors are not quite grounded in the real; rather, they are asserted, declared. Of a bear the one poem's speaker notes, "all day I think of her-- / her white teeth, her wordlessness, her perfect love." Even though this bear flicks the grass with her tongue, sharpens her claws against the "silence/of the trees," the reader cannot quite see her. It's as if Oliver reports on mysteries rather than embodying them. And so, despite its undeniable music, her work too often becomes rhetorical; too often its earnestness turns preachy and its feeling becomes sentimental.

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From Library Journal

This collection is drawn from seven previous books and includes 30 new poems (written in 1991 and 1992). Since her Pulitzer Prize-winning *American Primitive* (LJ 2/15/83), Oliver has continued to examine the natural world and its mysteries. There is a delightful, almost naive voice speaking in "A Certain Sharpness in the Morning Air," where encountering a skunk with "the white stripe like a river/ running down its spine" becomes an occasion for celebrating the shaggy "wild life of the fields." Oliver's ability to fashion an image is evident in "Water Snake," where the shy reptile looks at the poet with "gravel eyes" and probes the air with "the feather of his tongue." Other creatures inspire poems, as do lilies, ponds, skunk cabbage, and moccasin flowers. But these are more than odes to nature. Oliver writes with a sure touch and a simple elegance of other concerns: the acceptance of fate, the shortness of life, the inevitability of loss and suffering. Her poems express the human need to be at home in the world until we rise and fall "into something better."-

- Francis Poole, Univ. of Delaware Lib., Newark

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lila Dixon:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to

fill your own free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the book untitled New and Selected Poems can be excellent book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Cecilia Moore:

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Roger Hodge:

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