

# Blue Pastures

By Mary Oliver

Mary  
Oliver  
Blue  
Pastures

By the winner of the Pulitzer Prize  
and the National Book Award

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## Blue Pastures By Mary Oliver

With consummate craftsmanship, Mary Oliver has fashioned fifteen luminous prose pieces: on nature, writing, and herself and those around her. She praises Whitman, denounces cuteness, notes where to find the extraordinary, and extols solitude.

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## **Blue Pastures** By Mary Oliver **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

For better and for worse, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Oliver is a Romantic?capital R. She is enamored of nature, not the cute nature of spring flowers/ prancing fawns but Edmund Burke's awe-ful nature, with its "scream of the owl, which is not of pain and hopelessness and the fear of being plucked out of the world, but of the sheer rollicking glory of the death-bringer." Less fortunately, she also buys into romanticism's egomania: "My responsibility is not to the ordinary, or the timely. It does not include mustard, or teeth... My loyalty is to the inner vision, whenever and howsoever it may arrive. If I have a meeting with you at three o'clock, rejoice if I am late. Rejoice even more if I do not arrive at all." As in her previous prose volume, *A Poetry Handbook*, Oliver meditates on her hard-to-define art and goes on to consider her inspirations?Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Muir, Walt Whitman. But the best part of the book is Oliver's plein-air poetizing, consisting of tidbits almost all jotted down "somewhere out-of-doors": in her partial observations of nature ("Just at the lacey edge of the sea, a dolphin's skull"), her exhortations ("You must not ever stop being whimsical") or an evocative list ("Molasses, an orange, fennel seed, anise seed, rye flour, two cakes of yeast"), readers catch the first whiffs of poetry.

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#### From Library Journal

The poet's "responsibility is not to the ordinary, or the timely," writes the peerless poet Oliver. "It does not include mustard, or teeth." In this gathering of gorgeous short pieces, Oliver, who won the Pulitzer Prize for American Primitive (LJ 2/15/83), returns to the realm of the extraordinary and the mysterious?the realm of poetry?which she finds in nature. She ponders the terrible nightly hunt of the horned owl and relishes the terror that "is naturally and abundantly part of life, part of even...my own." She watches the dashing of small fry in a pond and wonders, "which one am I?" In "My Friend Walt Whitman" she pays homage to "the brother I did not have" whose poetic voice liberated her own; and in "Steepletop" she meditates on the great sad love affair between Edna Millay and George Dillon. Oliver demonstrates that she is not only an avid student of poetry but a great teacher: "The Poet's Voice" is a defense of the value of meter and a gentle rebuke to the confessional school. This transcendent collection is Oliver's joyful sharing of her love of her craft; not to be passed up.?Amy Boaz, "Library Journal"

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#### Review

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