

Mary Oliver Quotes

*World, Heart, Morning, Writing, Dog, Thinking, Want, Inspirational, Life, Fire,
Fall, Attention, Book, Believe, Years, Ideas, Beautiful, Dream, Love, Light*

it is a serious thing // just to be alive / on this fresh morning / in this broken world.

~Mary Oliver

Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness. It took me years to understand that this too, was a gift.

~Mary Oliver

I don't ask for the sights in front of me to change, only the depth of my seeing.

~Mary Oliver

Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?

~Mary Oliver

Instructions for living a life. Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.

~Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began.

~Mary Oliver

Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable.

~Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good. You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting. You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.

~Mary Oliver

In this universe we are given two gifts: the ability to love and the ability to question. Which are, at the same time, the fires that warm us and the fires that scorch us.

~Mary Oliver

You must not ever stop being whimsical. And you must not, ever, give anyone else the responsibility for your life.

~Mary Oliver

I believe in kindness. Also in mischief. Also in singing, especially when singing is not necessarily prescribed.

~Mary Oliver

Hello, sun in my face. Hello you who made the morning and spread it over the fields...Watch, now, how I start the day in happiness, in kindness.

~Mary Oliver

I held my breath as we do sometimes to stop time when something wonderful has touched us.

~Mary Oliver

The dream of my life is to lie down by a slow river and stare at the light in the trees - to learn something by being nothing

~Mary Oliver

And I say to my heart: rave on.

~Mary Oliver

I want to think again of dangerous and noble things. I want to be light and frolicsome. I want to be improbable and beautiful and afraid of nothing as though I had wings.

~Mary Oliver

So come to the pond, or the river of your imagination, or the harbor of your longing, and put your lips to the world. And live your life.

~Mary Oliver

My work is the world. Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird -

equal seekers of sweetness. Here the quickening yeast; there the blue plums.

~Mary Oliver

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination.

~Mary Oliver

Around me the trees stir in their leaves and call out, Stay awhile.

~Mary Oliver

It's morning, and again I am that lucky person who is in it.

~Mary Oliver

We need beauty because it makes us ache to be worthy of it.

~Mary Oliver

If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it.

~Mary Oliver

There are a hundred paths through the world that are easier than loving. But who wants easier?

~Mary Oliver

We shake with joy, we shake with grief. What a time they have, these two housed as they are in the same body.

~Mary Oliver

Listen--are you breathing just a little, and calling it a life?

~Mary Oliver

... Let us risk the wildest places, Lest we go down in comfort, and despair.

~Mary Oliver

You never know / What opportunity / Is going to travel to you, / Or through you.

~Mary Oliver

Look, I want to love this world as though it's the last chance I'm ever going to get to be alive and know it.

~Mary Oliver

When will you have a little pity for every soft thing that walks through the world, yourself included.

~Mary Oliver

Every day I walk out into the world / to be dazzled, then to be reflective.

~Mary Oliver

He is exactly the poem I wanted to write.

~Mary Oliver

Let me keep my mind on what matters, which is my work, which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished.

~Mary Oliver

I saw that worrying had come to nothing and gave it up. And took my old body and went out into the morning, and sang.

~Mary Oliver

Wild sings the bird of the heart in the forests of our lives.

~Mary Oliver

Music: what so many sentences aspire to be.

~Mary Oliver

The stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds, and there was a

new voice which you slowly recognized as your own.

~Mary Oliver

Said the river: imagine everything you can imagine, then keep on going.

~Mary Oliver

Poetry isn't a profession, it's a way of life. It's an empty basket; you put your life into it and make something out of that.

~Mary Oliver

Sometimes I need only to stand wherever I am to be blessed.

~Mary Oliver

Ordinarily, I go to the woods alone. When I'm alone I can hear the almost unhearable sound of the roses singing. If you have ever gone to the woods with me, I must love you very much.

~Mary Oliver

Walks work for me. I enter some arena that is neither conscious or unconscious.

~Mary Oliver

And now I understand something so frightening & wonderful- how the mind clings to the road it knows, rushing through crossroads, sticking like lint to the familiar.

~Mary Oliver

Don't we all die someday and someday comes all too soon? What will you do with your own wild, glorious chance at this thing we call life.

~Mary Oliver

But I also say this: that light is an invitation to happiness, and that happiness, when it's done right, is a kind of holiness, palpable and

redemptive.

~Mary Oliver

There is only one question: / how to love this world.

~Mary Oliver

You can have the other words-chance, luck, coincidence, serendipity.
I'll take grace. I don't know what it is exactly, but I'll take it.

~Mary Oliver

Though I play at the edges of knowing, truly I know our part is not
knowing, but looking, and touching, and loving

~Mary Oliver

Because of the dog's joyfulness, our own is increased. It is no small
gift.

~Mary Oliver

As long as you're dancing, you can break the rules.

~Mary Oliver

I believe in kindness. Also in mischief.

~Mary Oliver

It is the nature of stone to be satisfied. It is the nature of water to want
to be somewhere else.

~Mary Oliver

On poetry: Everyone wants to know what it means. But nobody is
asking, How does it feel?

~Mary Oliver

I want to be braver and more honest about my life. When you're
sexually abused, there's a lot of damage.

~Mary Oliver

Always there is something worth saying about glory, about gratitude.

~Mary Oliver

There were times over the years when life was not easy, but if you're working a few hours a day and you've got a good book to read, and you can go outside to the beach and dig for clams, you're okay.

~Mary Oliver

All eternity is in the moment.

~Mary Oliver

Sunrise 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, it is another one of the ways to enter fire.

~Mary Oliver

To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work.

~Mary Oliver

We can know a lot. And still, no doubt, there are rash and wonderful ideas brewing somewhere; there are many surprises yet to come.

~Mary Oliver

When it's over, I want to say: all my life I was a bride married to amazement. I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

~Mary Oliver

And I do not want anymore to be useful, to be docile, to lead / children out of the fields into the text / of civility, to teach them that they are (they are not) better than the grass.

~Mary Oliver

Snow was falling, so much like stars filling the dark trees that one could easily imagine its reason for being was nothing more the prettiness.

~Mary Oliver

I tell you this to break your heart, by which I mean only that it break open and never close again to the rest of the world.

~Mary Oliver

The most regretful people on earth are those who felt the call to creative work, who felt their own creative power restive and uprising, and gave to it neither power nor time.

~Mary Oliver

Rhythm is one of the most powerful of pleasures, and when we feel a pleasurable rhythm we hope it will continue. When it does, it grows sweeter.

~Mary Oliver

Still, what I want in my life is to be willing to be dazzled---to cast aside the weight of facts and maybe even to float a little above this difficult world.

~Mary Oliver

Be good-natured and untidy in your exuberance.

~Mary Oliver

I was hurrying through my own soul . . . I was leaning out . . . I was listening.

~Mary Oliver

Do you love this world? Do you cherish your humble and silky life? Do you adore the green grass, with its terror beneath?

~Mary Oliver

A lifetime isn't long enough for the beauty of this world and the responsibilities of your life.

~Mary Oliver

I don't know lots of things but I know this: next year when spring flows over the starting point I'll think I'm going to drown in the shimmering miles of it.

~Mary Oliver

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

~Mary Oliver

Maybe the world, without us, is the real poem.

~Mary Oliver

Every adjective and adverb is worth five cents. Every verb is worth fifty cents.

~Mary Oliver

Every word is a messenger. Some have wings; some are filled with fire; some are filled with death.

~Mary Oliver

I simply do not distinguish between work and play.

~Mary Oliver

Of course! The path to heaven doesn't lie down in flat miles. It's in the imagination with which you perceive this world, and the gestures with which you honor it.

~Mary Oliver

And who will care, who will chide you if you wander away from wherever you are, to look for your soul?

~Mary Oliver

I have a little dog who likes to nap with me. He climbs on my body and puts his face in my neck. He is sweeter than soap. He is more wonderful than a diamond necklace, which can't even bark.

~Mary Oliver

Each body is a lion of courage, something precious of the earth.

~Mary Oliver

Come with me into the woods where spring is advancing, as it does, no matter what, not being singular or particular, but one of the forever gifts, and certainly visible.

~Mary Oliver

Love yourself. Then forget it. Then, love the world.

~Mary Oliver

You want to cry aloud for your mistakes. But to tell the truth the world doesn't need any more of that sound.

~Mary Oliver

The sea isn't a place but a fact, and a mystery.

~Mary Oliver

If you have ever gone into the woods with me, I must love you very much.

~Mary Oliver

Every day I see or hear something that more or less kills me with delight, that leaves me like a needle in the haystack of light.

~Mary Oliver

A dog can never tell you what she knows from the smells of the world, but you know, watching her, that you know almost nothing.

~Mary Oliver

There is a notion that creative people are absent-minded, reckless, heedless of social customs and obligations. It is, hopefully, true for they are in another world altogether.

~Mary Oliver

You, too, can be carved anew by the details of your devotion.

~Mary Oliver

You must not ever stop being whimsical.

~Mary Oliver

The end of life has its own nature, also worth our attention.

~Mary Oliver

I have a notion that if you are going to be spiritually curious, you better not get cluttered up with too many material things.

~Mary Oliver

And to tell the truth I don't want to let go of the wrists of idleness, I don't want to sell my life for money, I don't even want to come in out of the rain.

~Mary Oliver

Are my boots old? Is my coat torn? / Am I no longer young, and still not half-perfect?

~Mary Oliver

Every year everything I have ever learned in my lifetime leads back to this: the fires and the black river of loss whose other side is salvation

~Mary Oliver

You have to be in the world to understand what the spiritual is about, and you have to be spiritual in order to truly be able to accept what the

world is about.

~Mary Oliver

Attention is the beginning of devotion.

~Mary Oliver

Belief isn't always easy. But this much I have learned--- if not enough else--- to live with my eyes open.

~Mary Oliver

...whoever you are, not matter how lonely the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh & exciting - over & over announcing your place in the family of things.

~Mary Oliver

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