**Spring Poetry Journal**

Read two poems. Write a journal in response.

Options to write about:

1. Write your own poem about Spring

2. Analyze/ discuss the two poems given.

* Which one did they prefer and why.
* What do the two poems have in common, how do they differ
* Choose two lines/ phrases to analyze
* What do they like dislike about poetry in general.
* Do they ever write or read it themselves.

**Such Singing in the Wild Branches**

It was spring  
and I finally heard him  
among the first leaves––  
then I saw him clutching the limb

in an island of shade  
with his red-brown feathers  
all trim and neat for the new year.  
First, I stood still

and thought of nothing.  
Then I began to listen.  
Then I was filled with gladness––  
and that's when it happened,

when I seemed to float,  
to be, myself, a wing or a tree––  
and I began to understand  
what the bird was saying,

and the sands in the glass  
stopped  
for a pure white moment  
while gravity sprinkled upward

like rain, rising,  
and in fact  
it became difficult to tell just what it was that was singing––  
it was the thrush for sure, but it seemed

not a single thrush, but himself, and all his brothers,  
and also the trees around them,  
as well as the gliding, long-tailed clouds  
in the perfect blue sky–––all of them

were singing.  
And, of course, so it seemed,  
so was I.  
Such soft and solemn and perfect music doesn't last

For more than a few moments.  
It's one of those magical places wise people  
like to talk about.  
One of the things they say about it, that is true,

is that, once you've been there,  
you're there forever.  
Listen, everyone has a chance.  
Is it spring, is it morning?

Are there trees near you,  
and does your own soul need comforting?  
Quick, then––open the door and fly on your heavy feet; the song  
may already be drifting away.

-Mary Oliver “

Poetry is a life-cherishing force. And it requires a vision-a faith, to use an old fashioned term. Yes, indeed. For poems are not words, after all, but fires for the cold, ropes let down to the lost, something as necessary as bread in the pockets of the hungry. Yes, indeed.”

Oliver was born in 1935. She attended both Ohio State University and Vassar College, but never finished a degree. She served as a live-in companion for several years to the ageing sister of poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. During this time she met photographer Molly Malone Cook, with whom she lived for more than forty years, until Cook’s death in 2005 from lung cancer. Oliver has won many awards for her poetry, including the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1984 for the volume American Primitive and the National Book Award for New and Selected Poems Vol.I. (Beacon Press)

The natural world is the focal point of Oliver’s poetry. Through astute observation and attention (which she likens to prayer) she writes of the human condition as expressed in nature. She writes of birds and lakes, rivers, animals, flowers, wind and storms. Throughout the poems one feels the stillness, humor and grandeur of the outdoors, but is directed also to think about life as a consequence of it. “There is about Mary Oliver’s poetry a deep and miraculous composure-the words are hers, the pleasure ours.” (Homer)

Such Singing in the Wild Branches is a poem written in 2003 and is contained in the volume Owls and Other Fantasies. (pp.8-9)

**I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud**

I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine

And twinkle on the milky way,

They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay:

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they

Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

A poet could not but be gay,

In such a jocund company:

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought

What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude;

And then my heart with pleasure fills,

And dances with the daffodils.

[lyric poem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyric_poetry) by [William Wordsworth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wordsworth). It is Wordsworth's most famous work.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Wandered_Lonely_as_a_Cloud#cite_note-3)

The poem was inspired by an event on 15 April [1802](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1802_in_literature) in which Wordsworth and his sister [Dorothy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorothy_Wordsworth) came across a "long belt" of daffodils.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Wandered_Lonely_as_a_Cloud#cite_note-:0-4) Written some time between 1804 and 1807 (in 1804 by Wordsworth's own account),[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Wandered_Lonely_as_a_Cloud#cite_note-Moorman_1965_p._27-5) it was first published in 1807 in [*Poems, in Two Volumes*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poems,_in_Two_Volumes), and a revised version was published in 1815.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Wandered_Lonely_as_a_Cloud#cite_note-6)

In a poll conducted in 1995 by the [BBC Radio 4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_Radio_4) *Bookworm* programme to determine the nation's favourite poems, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* came fifth.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Wandered_Lonely_as_a_Cloud#cite_note-7) Often [anthologised](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthology), the poem is commonly seen as a classic of English [Romantic poetry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romantic_poetry), although *Poems, in Two Volumes*, in which it first appeared, was poorly reviewed by Wordsworth's contemporaries.

**William Wordsworth** (7 April 1770 – 23 April 1850) was an English [Romantic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romantic_poetry) poet who, with [Samuel Taylor Coleridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Taylor_Coleridge), helped to launch the [Romantic Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism) in [English literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_literature) with their joint publication [*Lyrical Ballads*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyrical_Ballads) (1798).

Wordsworth's [*magnum opus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masterpiece) is generally considered to be [*The Prelude*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Prelude), a semi-autobiographical poem of his early years that he revised and expanded a number of times. It was posthumously titled and published by his wife in the year of his death, before which it was generally known as "the poem to Coleridge".[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wordsworth#cite_note-1) Wordsworth was Britain's [poet laureate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet_laureate) from 1843 until his death from [pleurisy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleurisy) on 23 April 1850.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wordsworth#cite_note-2)