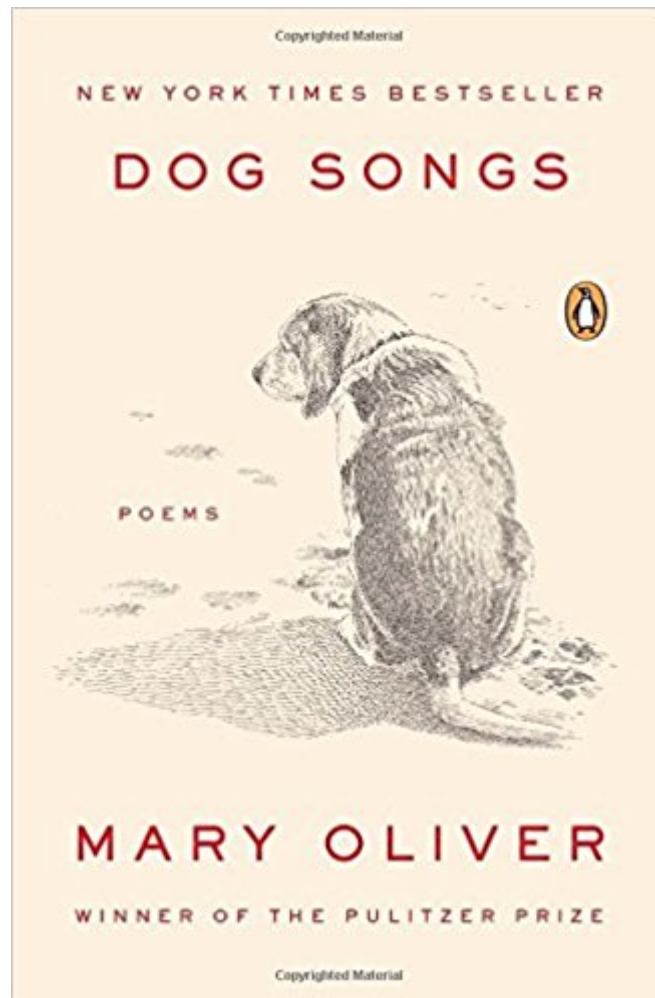




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# Dog Songs: Poems



## Synopsis

“The popularity of [Dog Songs] feels as inevitable and welcome as a wagging tail upon homecoming.” • The Boston Globe “Mary Oliver’s Dog Songs is a celebration of the special bond between human and dog, as understood through the poet’s relationships to the canines that have accompanied her daily walks, warmed her home, and inspired her work. Oliver’s poems begin in the small everyday moments familiar to all dog lovers, but through her extraordinary vision, these observations become higher meditations on the world and our place in it. Dog Songs includes visits with old friends, like Oliver’s beloved Percy, and introduces still others in poems of love and laughter, heartbreak and grief. Throughout, the many dogs of Oliver’s life merge as fellow travelers and as guides, uniquely able to open our eyes to the lessons of the moment and the joys of nature and connection.”

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The New York Times “Dog Songs... is a sweet golden retriever of a book that curls up with the reader.” • The Boston Globe “Oliver is one of our most adored poets, and a longtime lover of dogs. The popularity of [Dog Songs] feels as inevitable and welcome as a wagging tail upon homecoming.” • Oprah.com “Mary Oliver is a canine lover par excellence. Her combo of woman’s best friend and poetry is utterly irresistible.” • The Rumpus “Mary Oliver’s Dog Songs is, plainly put, a lovely and accessible book of poems.” • Time Out “Oliver’s capacity for simple ecstasy in response to the natural world remains. The new Dog Songs turns material about canines into something

meaningful. **Bust Magazine** "The set of poems all feature dogs, a species much beloved by the poet; she writes of her canine companions with as much awe and reverence as she does other miraculous beasts and natural phenomena. They read as embodiments of the natural order, comprehending the cycle of life and death in ways no human can. **Brain Pickings**: "Dog Songs collects her most soul-stirring poems and short prose celebrating that special human-canine relationship and what it reveals about the meaning of our own lives • a beautiful manifestation of Oliver's singular sieve for extracting from the particularities of the poetic subject the philosophical universalities of the human condition to illuminate what it means to live a good life, a full life, a life of purpose and presence. **Bookish, The Houston Chronicle**: "The collection invites us to linger awhile in the pure happiness Oliver feels toward dogs, most notably, her beloved dog Percy. For Oliver, nature is our teacher and dogs some of the best professors. **The Bark**: "Renowned for her love of nature, Ms. Oliver writes exquisite, lyrical poems that remind the reader of how much there is to love in this world. Nowhere is this love more evident than in Oliver's latest collection, *Dog Songs*. These poems will make you smile, laugh, cry and nod your head in delighted agreement."

Born in a small town in Ohio, Mary Oliver published her first book of poetry in 1963 at the age of twenty-eight. She currently lives in Florida.

My wife lovvvvvves dogs--and not just our dog (though he gets special royalty status)--AND Mary Oliver. So when I bumped into this book, I knew I had to get it for her right away. And she's delighted with the book. Even I (also a lover of dogs--though less appreciative of poetry) was charmed--and more important--touched by MO's words and the poems in this slim volume (which include both previously published and new works). Mary Oliver is actually one of the few poets who does move me--and obviously I'm not alone. Probably some experts and academics will scoff, but to me she has both a delicacy and down-to-earth quality that offer grace so even someone like myself, who might be a bit tone deaf to the mystery and romance of more obscure works, really sees/listens (

Poetry speaks to me. I like the standard poets, Plath, Heaney, Auden, Housman, Dickinson, and the full canon of must-read-because-you're-an-English-major, Sir Thomas Wyatt, John Donne, John Milton, Percy Shelley. For pure love and enjoyment, I turn to Mary Oliver. When I found out her new

book would be published in October, I pre-ordered it. How could I resist a book named DOG SONGS? I read these poems aloud to my dogs. Oliver reminds us that our dogs live in the moment, but they also feel our emotions. We know when we love a dog that its lifespan will probably be shorter than our own, and we must come to terms with the grief. In this volume, Oliver's poems give the various dogs, some hers, some from the neighborhood, voices. They do speak to us. Her Percy poems (Percy now deceased) are magical. She says, "For often I see his shape in the clouds/and this is/a continual blessing." I look for my dogs in the clouds too. I know this feeling. Other poems celebrate dogs running leash-free, dogs making friends, dogs sharing their finds (dead fish), the dog's adoration of his human: "Percy, meanwhile,/leans against me and gazes up into my face. As though I were just as wonderful/as the perfect moon." If you love a dog, pick up these poems. They will help you celebrate your love, and when that someday comes, grieve the loss. Another favorite line, "Tell me you love me, he says./"Tell me again." Yes, Mary Oliver, I will tell my dogs I love them. And I love you too.

YES! it absolutely did meet my expectations. I have it on my breakfast table and start my day with one of Molly's beautiful poems that speak to my heart in a special way. Even though I am a "cat person" and not especially a "dog person". I have had dogs that I loved and some I have hated having been bitten 3 times and a brute of a dog killed my favorite calico right before my very eyes. I love all of the animals and understand that is nature at work. Don't have much patience with "cat haters" though. And yes, all dogs do go to heaven (Job 12:7-10). . . and kitties too.

This might not be Oliver's strongest collection, but that would be an extremely high standard to meet. At its best, "Dog Poems" is accessible, crisp, and able to reveal depths of meaning with the alacrity and openness which is characteristic of Oliver's most interesting poetry over the years. However, the continuing focus on dogs seems a little cumbersome if one is trying to read the book from cover to cover. Rather, this is a collection to read in snippets, preferably with one's canine companions in sight. Any dog lover will be touched, humored, and excited by this collection at various times. Any longtime reader of Oliver will be glad to re-encounter Percy, of course, and can also look forward to getting to know other dogs and the thoughts they inspire as well. The illustrations deserve to be given attention as well... they catch the expressiveness and godliness of their subjects quite well, and add to the fulfillment offered by this book to anyone who loves dogs, and all that they can teach us.

If you enjoy Mary Oliver's unique poetic style, or if you just love dogs, you'll like this book. Very entertaining, and a quick read as each page is only printed on one side. I enjoyed reading it over several days. A perfect gift for a dog lover.

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