



Comprising a selection of essays, *Upstream* finds beloved poet Mary Oliver reflecting on her astonishment and admiration for the natural world and the craft of writing.

As she contemplates the pleasure of artistic labor, finding solace and safety within the woods, and the joyful and rhythmic beating of wings, Oliver intimately shares with her readers her quiet discoveries, boundless curiosity, and exuberance for the grandeur of our world.

This radiant collection of her work, with some pieces published here for the first time, reaffirms Oliver as a passionate and prolific observer whose thoughtful meditations on spiders, writing a poem, blue fin tuna, and Ralph Waldo Emerson inspire us all to discover wonder and awe in life's smallest corners.

- Excerpt from *Goodreads*

Preliminary Questions for Thinking and Discussing

You will be asked the following questions or questions like them during the first week of class, and you will be asked to craft some short writing responses as well. Consider these as you read; you may want to take notes or prepare responses (not required).

NOTE: The text will be paired with other activities, films, and resources once we are together.

1. Identify one or two individual essays or situations that you found particularly impactful. What made it so? What else does it make you think/wonder about?
2. Describe the author's voice and/or style. Do you trust the information presented? Do you find it relevant and engaging? Why or why not?
3. What signs did you see in the text for hope? What warnings or evidence of failure did you see? How did these affect your response to the issues addressed and your response to the text?
4. To what extent do you see yourself getting involved with the topic(s) presented in the text?
5. You have three sentences to describe the message of this book to the St. Mary's community. What should your peers know about it?

In addition, please come into the first day of class with an outline or concept map for your college essay. Please select from the Common Application prompts for 2022.