

are waking up now full of oil, # sleep sweat, tag-ends of dreams. The rain # rubs its shining hands all over me. # My dog returns and barks fiercely, he says # each secret body is the richest advisor, # deep in the black earth such fuming # nuggets of joy! # For her abiding communion with nature, Ms. Oliver was often compared to Walt Whitman and Robert Frost. For her quiet, measured observations, and for her fiercely private personal mien (she gave many readings but few interviews, saying she wanted her work to speak for itself), she was likened to Emily Dickinson. # Ms. Oliver often described her vocation as the observation of life, and it is clear from her texts that she considered the vocation a quasi-religious one. Her poems -- those about nature as well as those on other subjects -- are suffused with a pulsating, almost mystical spirituality, as in the work of the American Transcendentalists or English poets like William Blake and Gerard Manley Hopkins. # Readers were also drawn to Ms. Oliver's poems by their quality of confiding intimacy; to read one is to accompany her on one of her many walks through the woods or by the shore. Poems often came to her on these walks, and she prepared for this eventuality by secreting pencils in the woods near her home. # Throughout Ms. Oliver's career, critical reception of her work was mixed. Some reviewers were put off by the surface simplicity of her poems and, in later years, by her populist reach. Reviewing her first collection, " No Voyage, " in The New York Times Book Review in 1965, James Dickey wrote,