



# God of Dirt: Mary Oliver and the Other Book of God

*Thomas Mann*

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Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *American Primitive*, Mary Oliver has published twelve books of poetry and five books of essays. Her poems are quoted in everything from Web sites to hymn books. *Earthlight*, a “Magazine of Spiritual Ecology,” has declared her an “earth saint.”

In this engaging study, Mann shows Oliver to have keen eyes and ears for reading the book of nature. Readers will discover that the correspondence between Oliver's poetry and traditional religious language provides a fresh perspective from which to enjoy her work. Here there is a god, but one who at first seems unrecognizable, at least to Judeo-Christian religious tradition. We know of the “God of heaven,” and even the “God of heaven and earth,” but a god of dirt?

Oliver's reading of the Other Book of God invites us into nature's “temple” where we may come into the presence of the holy and from which we may leave rejuvenated and blessed. *God of Dirt* is an important study of a contemporary poet whose work is as likely to be read by a preacher in a pulpit as by an activist at an environmental rally, and will help us experience a new vision of the beauty of our world.



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