

Hi, everyone. My name is Anna Bastidas. I use she, her, hers pronouns. I'm the Associate Director of the Bowdoin Outing Club.

I hope you all are doing well on this sunny, Maine May day. We're getting close to the end of the academic year, so I thought I'd send us into summer with some poems by Mary Oliver.

These are a couple of my favorites that remind me of summertime and summertime in Maine, in particular. And they're from "New and Selected Poems, Volume One" by Mary Oliver. So, I'll start with one of my favorites, which is called "Sleeping in the Forest."

I thought the Earth remembered me. She took me back so tenderly, arranging her dark skirts, her pockets full of lichens and seeds. I slept as never before, a stone on the river bed, nothing between me and the white fire of the stars, but my thoughts. And they floated, light as moths, among the branches of the perfect trees. All night I heard the small kingdoms breathing around me, the insects and the birds who do their work in the darkness. All night I rose and fell, as if in water, grappling with a luminous doom. By morning, I had vanished at least a dozen times into something better. And then my next one is called "Happiness."

In the afternoon, I watched the she-bear. She was looking for the secret bin of sweetness, honey that the bees store in the trees' soft caves. Black block of gloom, she climbed down, tree after tree and shuffled on through the woods. And then she found it. The honey house, deep as heartwood, and dipped into it among the swarming bees. Honey and comb, she lipped and tongued and scooped out in her black nails, until maybe she grew full. Or sleepy or maybe a little drunk, and sticky down the rugs of her arms and began to hum and sway. I saw her let go of the branches. I saw her lift her honeyed muzzle into the leaves and her thick arms, as though she would fly. An enormous bee, all sweetness and wings, down into the meadows. The perfection of honeysuckle and roses and clover to float and sleep in the sheer nets swaying from flower to flower, day after shining day.

I have just a couple more for you. This one is about picking blueberries, which is one of my favorite things to do, in August in Maine. And this is called "Picking Blueberries, Austerlitz, New York, 1957."

Once, in summer, in the blueberries, I fell asleep and woke when a deer stumbled against me. I guess she was so busy with her own happiness, she had grown careless and was just wandering along. Listening to the wind as she leaned down to lip up the sweetness. So there we were, with nothing between us, but a few leaves and the winds glossy voice shouting instructions. The deer backed away finally, and flung up

her white tail and went floating off towards the trees. But the moment before she did that was so wide and so deep it has lasted to this day. I have only to think of her, the flower of her amazement and the stalled breath of her curiosity, and even the damp touch of her solicitude before she took flight. To be absent again from this world and alive again in another, for 30 years, sleepy and amazed, rising out of the rough weeds, listening and looking. Beautiful girl, where are you?

Okay. And I have one more which is fittingly called "The Summer Day."

Who made the world? Who made the swan and the black bear? Who made the grasshopper? This grasshopper, I mean. The one who has flung herself out of the grass and the one who is eating sugar out of my hand. Who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down. Who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes. Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face. Now she snaps her wings open and floats away. I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention. How to fall down into the grass. How to kneel down in the grass. How to be idle and blessed. How to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all day. Tell me, what else should I have done? Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?

And with that, enjoy your summer break. And we will see you back at Bowdoin in the fall.