

KENT  
*Oliver* &

Exploring Select Works  
of Corita Kent & Mary Oliver



**KENT**  
*Oliver* &

By Roman Petrov

## Table of Contents

The Screenprinter	03
Work by Corita Kent	05
Nature's Poet	26
The Sun	29
At Blackwater Pond	32
Baiting the Boat	33
Winter in the Country	34
Creeks	35
Whelks	37
Where are You?	40
Buck Moon--From the Field	42
Guide to Insects	
Humpbacks	44
Poem of the One World	48
Sources	49
Colophon	50



*“You can enjoy the quality of the ad and not let them pressure you to buy what you don’t really need. I have had fun taking back superlatives and just ordinary good words and phrases from ads and trying to restore some of their life to them.”*

– Corita Kent

# THE SCREENPRINTER

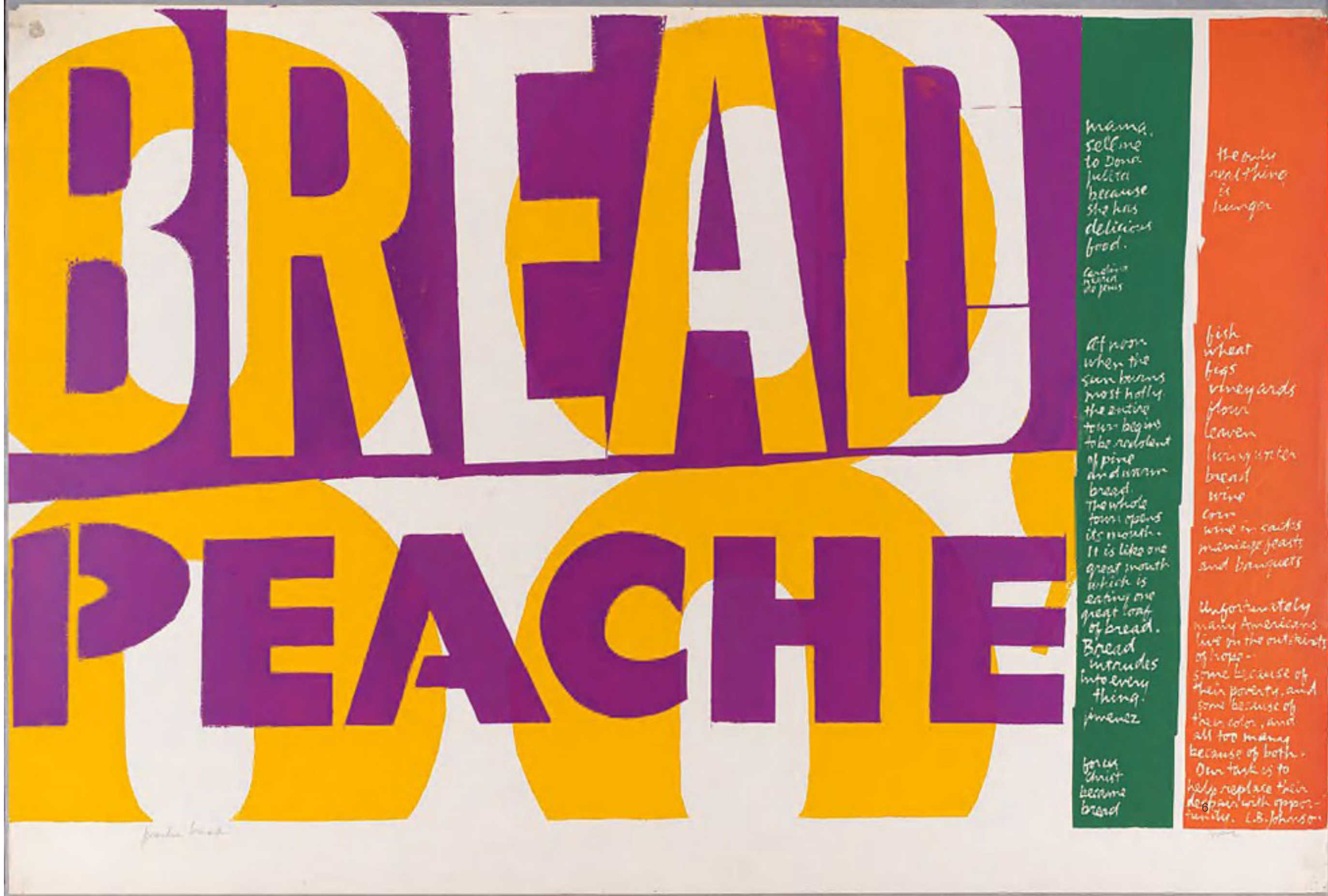


3

During her lifetime, the screen printer and visual artist Corita Kent has produced more than 800 prints. Her early career and an educator at the Immaculat Heart college from 1947 to 1968, where she took her leave from the IHC. Her work ranges in themes from religion, spirituality, poltics, social justice, upliftment and positivity. She made prints inspired by advertisement, public signage, and pop culture during her active artistic years.

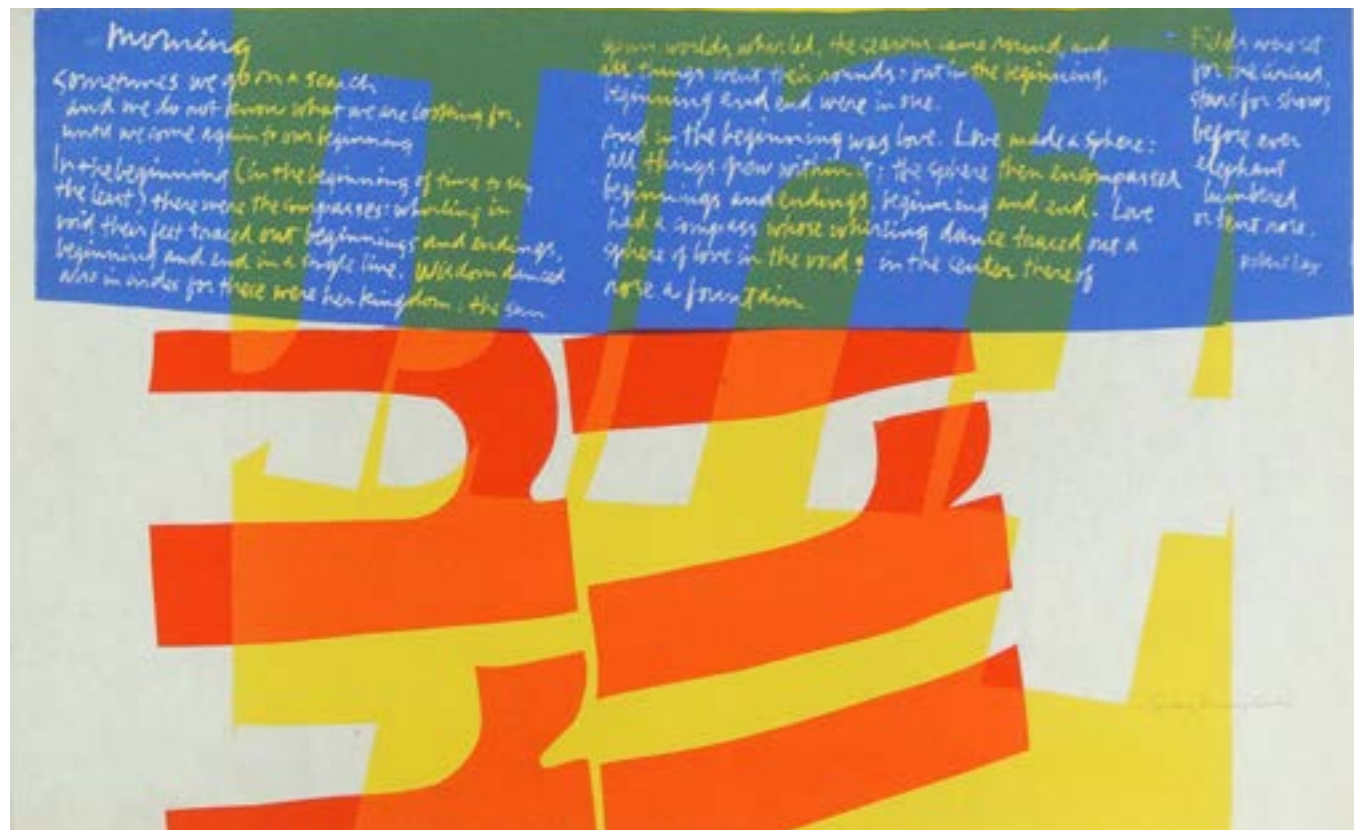
In Corita Kent's prints, the texts became the image, as was the case with much of what inspired her. In her prints the emulation of the always sunny Los Angeles was abundantly clear. The bright colors in her posters and the elements which they contained were stark in their contrast. Corita would be known to put intense hues of primary colors into her prints, as well as bringing together opposing colors. This distinctive style was born out of Corita's passion for craft and accessibility.

4



peache bread  
 screenprint  
 60.96 x 91.44 cm  
 1964

Kent



7

*morning*  
 screenprint  
 45.72 x 76.2 cm  
 1966



*evening*  
 screenprint  
 45.72 x 76.2 cm  
 1966

Corita Kent was famous for her sunny California inspired posters, but had her roots in Iowa, where she was born as the fifth out of six children, to Catholic parents. The family would relocate in 1923 to Hollywood, California, where Corita Kent, known at the time as Frances Elizabeth Kent experienced an up and coming, quiet town, not the star-plastered entertainment center of the world that the modern person might know it as today. Kent would spend much of this time drawing and making crafts, such as dolls and their clothes.

8





*D everything coming up daisies*  
screenprint  
57.2 x 57.2 cm  
1968

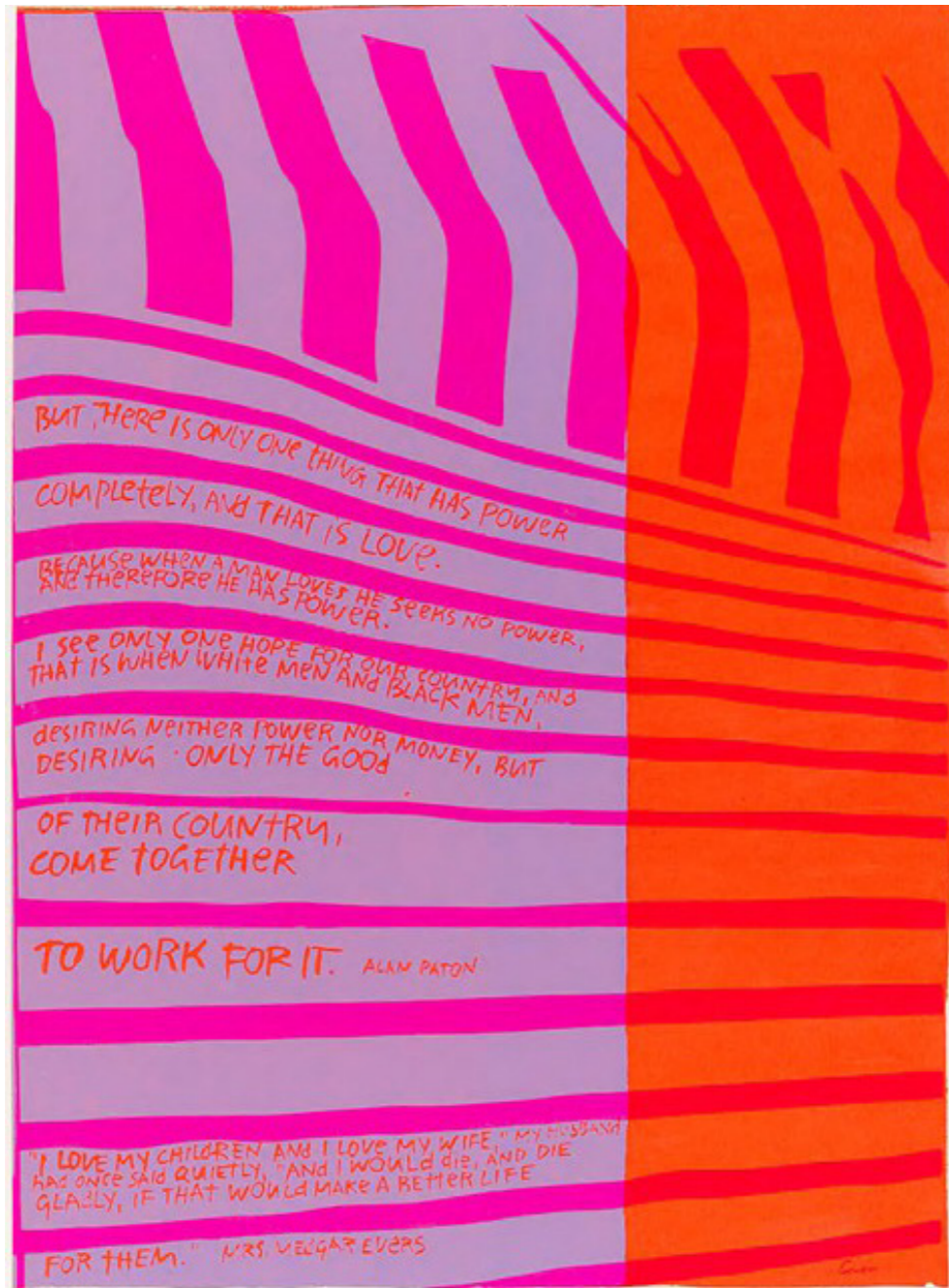


*G greatest show of worth*  
screenprint  
57 x 57.1 cm  
1968



*T the tight rope*  
screenprint  
57.3 x 57.4 cm  
1968

This was a sure sign of talent, as her parents would often support her, and Kent's teachers, nuns at the Catholic high School she attended, would encourage her throughout school to pursue her art studies and development after she graduated. It was then she made the decision to join the Immaculate heart of Mary and become a nun. It is here when Kent adopted the name Sister Mary Corita. Early in her career, Corita Kent would study the arts and art education and soon teach at the Immaculate Heart College (IHC) In Los Angeles. This was a private Catholic university where she would go on to teach arts to her students, but also had a longing to expand her own artistic practice.

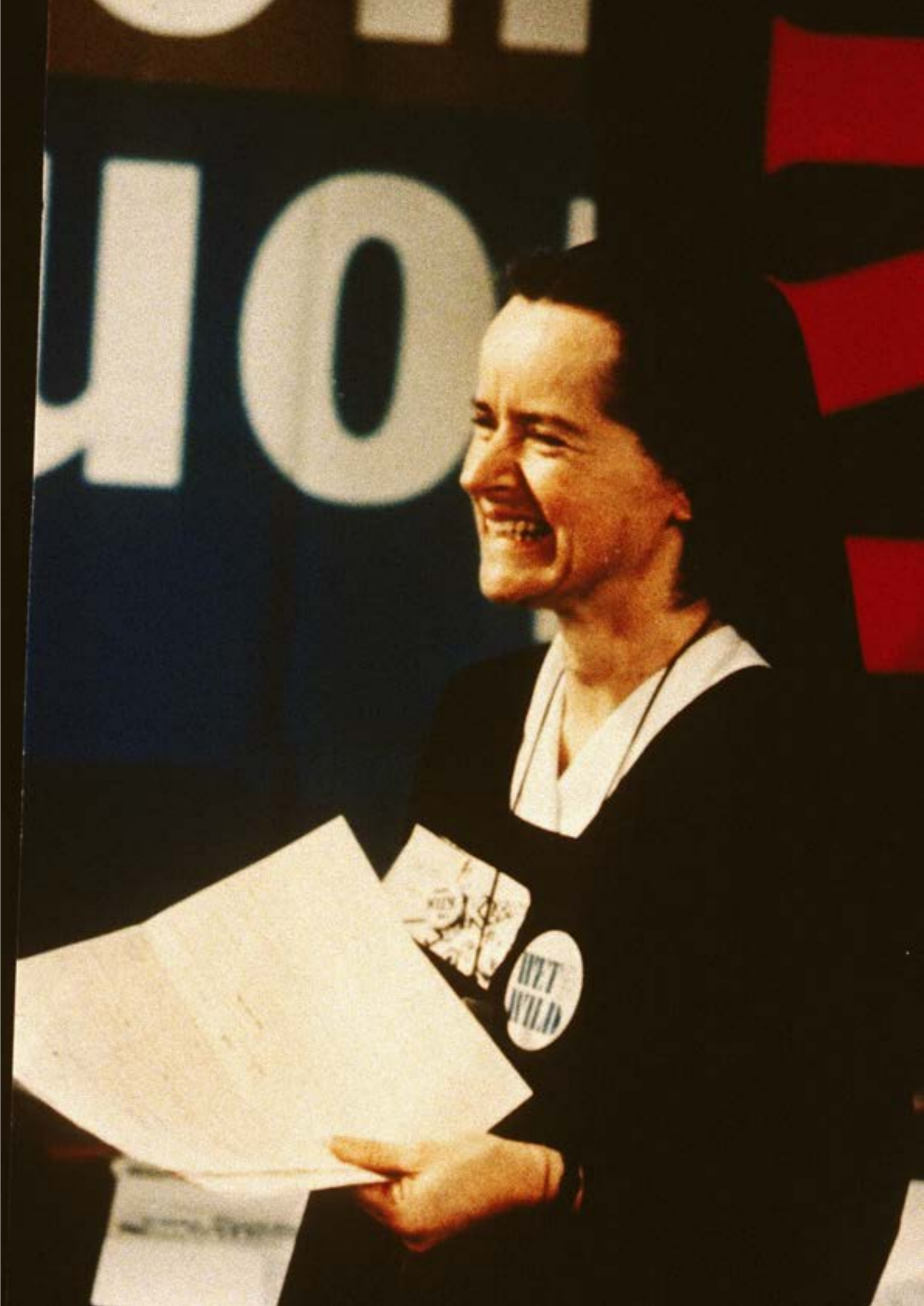


but, there is only one thing that has power  
screenprint  
58.4 x 41.6 cm  
1967

Text reads: *But there is only one thing that has power completely, and that is love. Because when a man loves he seeks no power, and therefore he has power. I see only one hope for our country, and that is when white men and black men, desiring neither power nor money, but desiring only the good of their country, come together to work for it. Alan Paton / "I love my children and I love my wife," my husband had once said quietly, "And I would die, and die gladly, if that would make a better life for them." Mrs. Medgar Evers*

*To dream about creating a new world that is not teetering on the edge of total destruction and not to work at it doesn't make a peaceful world. So it is important that we are creative people working daily on the greater picture as well, bringing to it all our skills of imagination and making. We make this larger picture also with hard daily work, by specific actions. All our creative skills are needed to keep up this tremendous work. And we work on it so that we and our children may have a world in which to fulfill our reason for being here—which is to create.*

*Coritz*



Kent



*tender be-part one-sr. william*  
 screenprint  
 76.2 x 91.4 cm  
 1964



*tender be-part two-night comes tenderly*  
 screenprint  
 76.2 x 91.4 cm  
 1964

Fortunately for Kent, the IHC was not the traditional Catholic institution, in which it possessed unique values that were more than likely influenced by the area in which they were in. The college was known for being a progressive institution, and supporting avant garde ideas and forward thinking concepts. Kent would graduate with a BA from the college in 1941 and was sent to teach in British Columbia, Canada in 1944, only to return in 1947 to join the teaching department at the IHC. Corita Kent would spend much of her time in this position, and only outputting work in the one month break she received every year while not teaching. It was in this short span of time that Kent would emit her political and spiritual beliefs, as well as what she had taken inward from around her into her prints. Her prints reflected the signage of the 40's 50's and 60's signage of Los Angeles and the rising Hollywood streetways. She would use bright colors and pop art influences to take prints even further.

**Give  
up  
going**

**NO**

the clue is in  
the "signs"  
which reveal  
themselves  
to the listening  
heart  
and so reprove  
our unmortified  
tamperings.

Such signs  
lead to further  
questions  
in the nature  
of things. The  
road does not reach  
its end when an  
answer is near; it forks  
out in two or five or a  
hundred new  
directions. DBenigan

St. Mary's Center

Kent

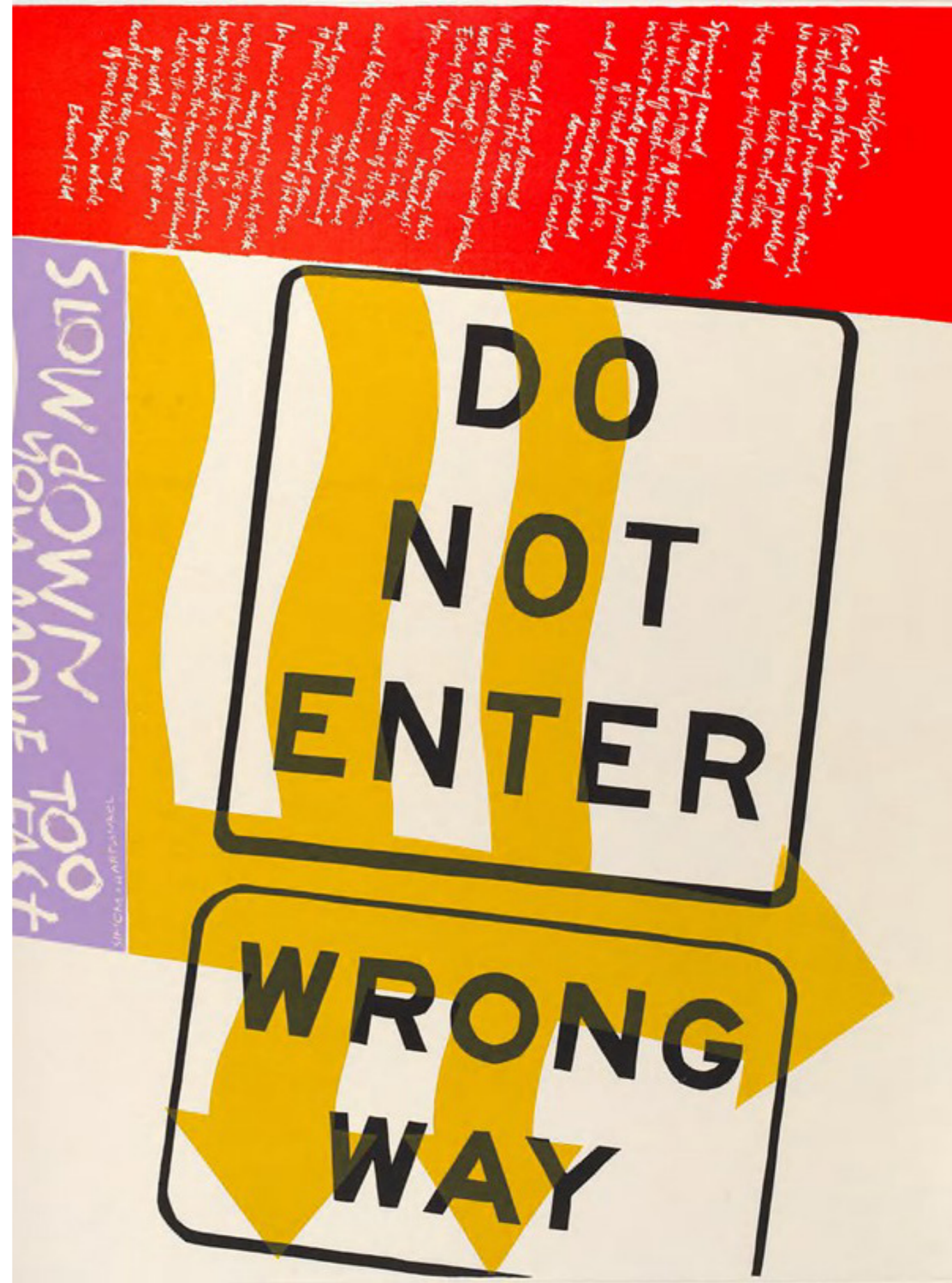


someday is now  
screenprint  
60 x 91 cm  
1964

(give the gang) the clue is in the signs  
screenprint  
52 x 76 cm  
1966



right  
screenprint  
76 x 91 cm  
1967



feelin' groovy  
screenprint  
76 x 91 cm  
1967





# NATURE'S POET



“Listen—are you breathing just a little, and calling it a life?”

25

An American award-winning poet who found much of her inspiration from the outdoors the physical, and sometimes the metaphysical elements of the natural world, Mary Oliver she spent much of her time in the woods as a form of escape from her life. She attended Ohio State university and Vassar College, but left both institutions without receiving a proper degree. She won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for her collections of poetry. Mary Oliver is a poet whose work is important to the location she writes about. The natural elements of the world she describes are from the places she exists in when she wrote them, in person or in thought. While Oliver did cite Ohio as a large

influence in much of her poetry, her career was mostly spent out and around around Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The waters of the ocean, and the many forests and natural areas gave Oliver a wide range of subjects from which to draw meaning. She often goes over a span of seasons in a single poem, which is a characteristic of New England as a whole, having the whole range of reasons. She delivers these elements of Massachusetts in different moods. Sometimes, her word choice leads to frightening and stark lines, as seen in Clam Man. She was also quite fond of the sea life in the Cape Cod bay. She would write about a few of them, in poems such as Humpbacks

26

*The Sun*

Have you ever seen  
anything  
in your life  
more wonderful

than the sun,  
every evening,  
relaxed and easy,  
floats toward the horizon

and into the clouds, or the hills,  
or the ruffled sea,  
and is gone—  
and how it slides again

out of the blackness,  
every morning,  
on the other side of the world,  
like a red flower

streaming upward on its heavenly oils,  
say, on a morning in early summer,  
at its perfect imperial distance—  
and have you ever felt for anything  
such wild love— do you think there is anywhere, in  
any language,  
a word billowing enough  
for the pleasure  
that fills you,  
as the sun  
reaches out,  
as it warms you

as you stand there,  
empty-handed—  
or have you too turned  
from this world—

or have you too  
gone crazy for power,  
for things?

*At Blackwater Pond*

At Blackwater Pond the tossed waters have settled  
after a night of rain.  
I dip my cupped hands. I drink  
a long time. It tastes  
like stone, leaves, fire, It falls cold  
into my body, waking the bones. I hear them  
deep inside me, whispering  
oh what is that beautiful thing  
that just happened?

and Whelks. This favoring of sea life was also accompanied by a desire for oceanic things. She would write much about fishing and boating in poems like *Bailing the Boat*, as well as travelling to lakes and other bodies of water in *Going to Walden*. Aquatica in general was a subject that very much interested Mary Oliver. It provided a wide range of subjects to reflect upon, as did the entire coast. Having multiple seasons, a wide range of flora and fauna, and the space to roam gave Mary Oliver all the resources she needed to write. She would use these elements to express different emotions, various primal urges, and her longing for the impossible.

*Bailing the Boat*

In Ohio we did not have the boats, we had horses.  
And our talk was all of harness and barns, Rubbing down  
and shoveling out,  
Cooling off, checking bit and buckle,  
The trim of the hoof, the look in the new colt's eye.

Well, we change, but we do not change much.

Done with bailing, I stow the gear  
And cast off.  
Snorting, the engine churns and comes alive!  
And with the arched neck she steps out over the water.

*Winter in the Country*

The terror of the country  
Is not the easy death,  
The fall of hawks out hunting  
Across the musical earth,

Nor yet the useless borning  
In every leafy den.  
The terror is that nothing  
Laments the narrow span.

Beasts of all marvelous feature,  
Of vibrant hoof and wing,  
Watch the white hands of winter  
Undoing everything,

And they do not cry or argue.  
The starlings of the day  
Never dreamt of better.  
Nibbling, they fall away.

The terror of the country  
Is prey and hawk together,  
Still flying, both exhausted,

*Creeks*

The dwindled creeks of summer,  
Unremarkable except,  
Down pasture, through woodlot,  
There are so many  
And keep such a pure sound  
In each roiling thread,  
Trickle past the knees of trees,  
Dropped leaves, salamanders,  
Each one scrubbing and cooling  
The pebbles of its bed.

My back to hickory,  
I sit hours in the damp wood, listening.  
It never ebbs.  
Its music is the shelf for other sounds:  
Birds, wind in the leaves, some tum-  
bled stones.

After awhile  
I forget things, as I have forgotten time.  
Death, love, ambition—the things that  
drive  
Like pumps in the big rivers.

My heart

Is quieted, at rest. I scarcely feel it.  
Little rivers, running everywhere,  
Have blunted the knife. Cool, cool,  
They wash above the bones.

*Whelks*

Here are the perfect  
fans of the scallops,  
quahogs, and weedy mussels  
still holding their orange fruit—  
and here are the whelks—  
whirlwinds,  
each the size of a fist,  
but always cracked and broken—  
clearly they have been travelling  
under the sky—blue waves  
for a long time.

All my life

I have been restless—

I have felt there is something

more wonderful than gloss—

than wholeness—

than staying at home.

I have not been sure what it is.

But every morning on the wide shore

I pass what is perfect and shining

to look for the whelks, whose edges

have rubbed so long against the world

they have snapped and crumbled—

they have almost vanished,  
with the last relinquishing  
of their unrepeatability energy,  
back into everything else.

When I find one

I hold it in my hand,

I look out over that shaking fire,

I shut my eyes. Not often,

but now and again there's a moment

when the heart cries aloud:

yes, I am willing to be

that wild darkness,

that long, blue body of light.

*Where are You?*

Where are you?

Do you know that the heart has a dungeon?

Bring light! Bring light!



*Buck Moon—From the Field Guide to Insects*

Eighty—eight thousand six—hundred  
different species in North America. In the trees, the grasses  
around us. Maybe more, maybe  
several million on each acre of earth. This one  
as well as any other. Where are you standing  
at dusk. Where the moon  
appears to be climbing the eastern sky. Where the wind  
seems to be traveling through the trees, and the frogs  
are content in their black ponds or else  
why do they sing? Where you feel  
a power that is not you but flows  
into you like a river. Where you lie down and breathe  
the sweet honey of the grass and count  
the stars; where you fall asleep listening  
to the simple chords repeated, repeated.  
Where, resting, you feel  
the perfection, the rising, the happiness  
of their dark wings.

*Humpbacks*

There is, all around us,  
this country  
of original fire.

You know what I mean.

The sky, after all, stops at nothing, so something  
has to be holding  
our bodies  
in its rich and timeless stables or else  
we would fly away.

Off Stellwagen  
off the Cape,  
the humpbacks rise. Carrying their tonnage  
of barnacles and joy  
they leap through the water, they nuzzle back under it  
like children  
at play.

They sing too.  
And not for any reason  
you can't imagine.

Three of them  
rise to the surface near the bow of the boat,  
then dive deeply, their huge scarred flukes  
tipped to the air.

We wait, not knowing  
just where it will happen; suddenly  
they smash through the surface, someone begins  
shouting for joy and you realize  
it is yourself they surge  
upward and you see for the first time  
how huge they are, as they breach,  
and dive, and breach again  
through the shining blue flowers  
of the split water and you see them  
for some unbelievable  
part of a moment against the sky—  
like nothing you've ever imagined—  
like the myth of the fifth morning galloping  
out of the darkness, pouring  
heavenward, spinning; then

they crash back under those black silks  
and we fall back  
together into that wet fire, you  
know what I mean.

I know a captain who has seen them  
playing with seaweed, swimming  
through the green islands, tossing  
the slippery branches into the air.

I know a whale that will come to the boat whenever  
she can, and nudge it gently along the bow  
with her long flipper.

I know several lives worth living.

Listen, whatever it is you try  
to do with your life, nothing will ever dazzle you  
like the dreams of your body,

its spirit  
longing to fly while dead-weight bones  
toss their dark mane and hurry  
back into the fields of glittering fire

where everything,  
even the great whale,  
throbs with song.

*Poem of the One World*

This morning  
the beautiful white heron  
was floating along above the water

And then into the sky of this  
the one world  
we all belong to

where everything  
sooner or later  
is a part of everything else

which thought made me feel  
for a little while  
quite beautiful myself

## Sources

"Corita Kent: To Create Is to Relate." Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, 3 July 2018, [www.contemporaryartgallery.ca/exhibitions/corita-kent/](http://www.contemporaryartgallery.ca/exhibitions/corita-kent/).

"The Tumultuous Times of Corita Kent." National Catholic Reporter, 3 Aug. 2016, [www.ncronline.org/books/2017/08/tumultuous-times-corita-kent](http://www.ncronline.org/books/2017/08/tumultuous-times-corita-kent).

Liz Ohanesian, et al. "Why a Local Art Org Is Trying to Save a Nondescript Hollywood Dry Cleaner from Demolition." Los Angeles Magazine, 20 Aug. 2020, [www.lamag.com/culturefiles/corita-kent-art-studio-franklin-ave/](http://www.lamag.com/culturefiles/corita-kent-art-studio-franklin-ave/).

"Mary Oliver - Listening to the World." The On Being Project, 3 Sept. 2020, [onbeing.org/programs/mary-oliver-listening-to-the-world/](http://onbeing.org/programs/mary-oliver-listening-to-the-world/).

"Corita Kent Biography, Life & Quotes." The Art Story, [www.theartstory.org/artist/kent-corita/life-and-legacy/](http://www.theartstory.org/artist/kent-corita/life-and-legacy/).

in History, Travel | March 11th. "Take a Drive Through 1940s, 50s & 60s Los Angeles with Vintage Through-the-Car-Window Films." Open Culture, [www.openculture.com/2020/03/take-a-drive-through-1940s-50s-60s-los-angeles.html](http://www.openculture.com/2020/03/take-a-drive-through-1940s-50s-60s-los-angeles.html).

"Corita Kent Biography, Life & Quotes." The Art Story, [www.theartstory.org/artist/kent-corita/life-and-legacy/](http://www.theartstory.org/artist/kent-corita/life-and-legacy/).

Michael Walker, et al. "These Images of 1960s L.A. Capture a Mythical Moment in History." Los Angeles Magazine, 8 Aug. 2019, [www.lamag.com/culture-files/1969-los-angeles/](http://www.lamag.com/culture-files/1969-los-angeles/).

"About Corita." Corita.org, [www.corita.org/about/corita](http://www.corita.org/about/corita).

"Oliver, Mary." Searchable Sea Literature, [sites.williams.edu/searchablesealit/o/oliver-mary/](http://sites.williams.edu/searchablesealit/o/oliver-mary/).

Poets.org, Academy of American Poets, [poets.org/poet/mary-oliver](http://poets.org/poet/mary-oliver).

Oliver, Mary. *A Thousand Mornings*. The Penguin Press, 2012.

Oliver, Mary. *New and Select Poems*. Beacon Press, 1992.

## Colophon

This book was written and designed by Roman Petrov  
for Professor Jan Fairbairn and  
AXD 353-02: Advanced Typographic Systems  
Spring 2021  
CVPA  
UMASS Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA  
Printed on A4  
Helvetica Neue Light, pt. size 10, 11, 19  
Helvetica Neue Bold, pt. size 31  
Apple Garamond Italic, pt. size 18  
Futura Black  
Palatino  
Krungthep



