

**MARY OLIVER**

*Oliver (1935) has won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for her poetry. She is a professor at Bennington College in Vermont*

**Wild Geese** (From her book of poems *Dream Work*)

*Listening Activity. Fill in the gaps.*

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk ..... your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it .....  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you .....  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the ..... pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
..... the prairies and deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air  
are heading ..... again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how .....  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you ..... the wild geese, harsh and exciting--  
over and over announcing your .....  
in the family of things.

*Grammar Teams. Comment these items and find sentences which include the issues they pose.*

You **do not have to** be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles **through** the desert, repenting. [*phonemic transcription + meaning + similar words?*]  
You only have to **let the soft animal of your body love** what it loves. [*Look for the lyrics of Strawberry Hills*]  
**Tell me about** despair, **yours**, and I will tell you mine. [*phonemic transcription + kind of word*]  
Meanwhile the world **goes on**.  
Meanwhile **the** sun and **the** clear pebbles of the rain [*use of "the" in the poem*]  
are **moving across** the landscapes,  
over the prairies and deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
**Meanwhile** the wild geese, high in the clean blue air [*cf. while/meanwhile, after/afterwards*]  
are **heading** home again.  
**Whoever** you are, no matter how **lonely**,  
the world **offers** itself to your imagination,  
**calls** to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting--  
**over and over** announcing your place  
in the family of **things**. [*phonemic transcription*]

*Memorizing. Learn this poem by heart. Listen to its audio version at*  
<http://www.mujePalabra.net/clasesytalleres/english/literature/oliver/oliver.htm>

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