

# Text in conversation essay samples

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



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## **Imagination**

Mary Oliver published Waste Land: An Elegy in the September – October 2003 issue of Orion magazine. In 2004, soon after publishing Waste Land, she released her book collection, Long life: Essays and Other Writings. Oliver fixes the imagery of how the site used to be as she projects her imagination to explore other potentials. Jamaica Kincaid first published Sowers and Reapers in the New Yorker on January 22, 2001. Although Kincaid is a well known a novelist, she is also a staff writer for the New Yorker who produced many essays examining her personal experiences. In this essay she forces her readers to use their imaginations experience how other can look at the same scene and have different emotional experiences. Toni Morrison wrote Strangers as an introduction to Robert Bergman’s, A Kind of Rapture published in 1998. In Bergman’s book, Morrison’s essay was entitled The Fisherwoman. In this essay imagines a friendship based on a chance meeting with a fisherwoman in a neighbor’s garden.. The three essays are examples of how imagination is used in writing a piece and the power of writing to stir the imagination of a reader. .

Mary Oliver is a witness to urban development and the destruction. Her site

of beauty is a former dumpsite that naturalized and evolved into a wildlife sanctuary. There were wild flowers, box turtles, foxes and deer among the wild things that called the site their home. As the neighborhood developed and gentrified new signs proclaimed it as a designated motorcycle and motorbike course. Its future is conversion into a part of the sewer system. They chase away the wild things and the essay is an elegy to their passing. Oliver writes,

I apologize to the hummingbird. I hope the snakes have found a new home. I hope the new system works. I am glad that I have a good memory; I will not forget the dainty tracks of the fox, or the goldfinches, or the everlasting. I think I know what our manifest, tree-filled, creature-lively world is- our garden and our pasture and our recreation. Also it is our school house, courthouse, church, graveyard, and the soft breath of eternity (Mary Oliver) .

In *Sowers and Reapers: The Unquiet World of a Flower Bed* by Jamaica Kincaid published in *New Yorker Magazine* she points out that African Americans view some historic American gardens as monuments to slavery and oppression. To the descendants of the slaves that did the work the gardens were not a place of peace and solitude. She speaks of how the African slaves as the sowers did most of the work on the gardens yet the reapers were the white people. She received criticism from Frank Cabot for this, he told her,

that he was sorry I had been invited that he was utterly offended by what I had said on the occasion I had used to say it, for I had done something unforgivable - - - I had introduced race and politics into the garden.

Both authors express their views and provide valuable insights into the relationship between different races, classes and the earth. Oliver's elegy is apologetic in its regret in not doing more to save the natural garden. Kincaid is seeking, if not an apology at least consideration for the descendants of the slaves who worked to create some of America's historic gardens. Their writings required imagination on their part to create, but most importantly, they force their readers to use their own imagination to understand the displaced feelings of a fox and the oppression of some viewing a public garden that celebrates the people who enslaved their ancestors.

Toni Morrison's *Strangers* relates how she met a woman fishing from the back wall of her neighbor's garden. The fisherwoman said she had her neighbor's permission to fish there, and that she came several times a week. Toni looked forward to meeting her again and forming a friendship. She wrote about this saying

When we part there is an understanding that she will be there the next day or very soon after and we will visit again. I imagine more conversations with her. I will invite her into my house for coffee, for tales, for laughter. She reminds me of someone, something. I imagine a friendship, casual, effortless, delightful.

Later she learned that nobody knew the fisherwoman or her whereabouts. Morrison relates the sense of loss she felt when she realized that the friendship she so clearly imagined was not to be. Morrison first went into her garden to enjoy its peaceful beauty, in that way she is very much like Oliver who enjoyed the beauty and peace in that little corner of wild space. Oliver did not go to her wild garden to meet people or enjoy their landscaping

expertise, quite the reverse; she appreciated having a break away from humanity. She appreciated the unruly wildflowers and natural topography that provided homes for so many different species. Oliver went there to escape and to avoid the new influx of people who were changing her town. She writes, “ They come, to this last town on the long Cape, in good part for the very beauty that their numbers imperil. They come for fellowship, the beaches and the sun “. From Oliver’s tone, she would have been disappointed to meet a stranger there. Morrison is quite different in that regard, she was delighted to meet the fisherwoman from a different town. Both authors spark readers’ imaginations by using just enough detail to encourage the readers to fill in the rest.

Kincaid views gardens from a different perspective than the other two writer. Her gardens are expansive, labor-intensive formal landscapes. Kincaid is the polar opposite in some ways from Oliver; Oliver’s beauty spot is devoid of humans, Kincaid’s was created and maintained by them. Morrison goes to her garden to relax. Kincaid starts her writing by asking, “ Why must people insist that the garden is a place of rest and repose, a place to forget the cares of the world, a place in which to distance yourself from the painful responsibility that comes with being a human being?” .

When we look at Morrison and Kincaid, both have a primary concern with people and gardens. Where Kincaid’s essay starts with a speaking engagement, Morrison’s is a chance encounter with a fisherwoman in a neighbor’s garden. Kincaid views the garden looking back to how the powerful people used slaves, and prisoners to use their skills and to do the heavy labor. Morrison meets a woman fishing from her neighbor’s garden,

after a brief conversation, she envisions a future friendship. She builds up a fantasy friendship in her mind, inviting the fisherwoman over for tea, talking and laughing together. Both authors make assumptions about people in gardens. Morrison writes about this saying,

For the stranger is not foreign, she is random; not alien but remembered; and it is the randomness of the encounter with our already known – though unacknowledged – selves that summons a ripple of alarm. That makes us reject the figure and the emotions it provokes – especially when these emotions are profound. In either instance (of alarm or false reverence), we deny her personhood, the specific individuality we insist upon for ourselves.

## **Conclusion**

The three writers use techniques to achieve a particular effect. These strategies make it interesting for readers to keep reading and improve their imagination. They give a clear picture of what is happening, increase readers' interactions with the writer and engage the reader's imagination. Oliver repeats the phrase, "this is an elegy". It helps readers focus on the subject. In particular, it captures their attention and arouses curiosity. It also helps to place emphasis on the points she is talking about. Kincaid writes as though she is talking to an audience. She builds a platform with her audience and asks rhetorical questions as though she expects an answer. She ridicules the gardens by asking if people like living near sculptures of the men who abused their ancestors. Morrison uses narrative pace. She conveys the intense feelings of her encounter with the fisherwoman and how she feels when she learns the truth. She notices details as small as what she was dressed in, what she told her and the time she spent together, yet fails to

remember her name thus denying her true individuality. The three writers used imagination in their articles. Each writer used rhetorical strategies, emotion and imagination to engage their readers. Imagination is an important element of writing and helps the readers to relate, communicate and build images. Rhetorical strategies create suspense and makes readers want to go on reading to find out what happens next. Emotion holds people long after the story is finished. These writings show how creative writers help their readers see the images in their minds. Readers can totally relate to what these are talking about. Although each writer is very different in some ways, they all use the same skills to capture and hold their audiences,

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