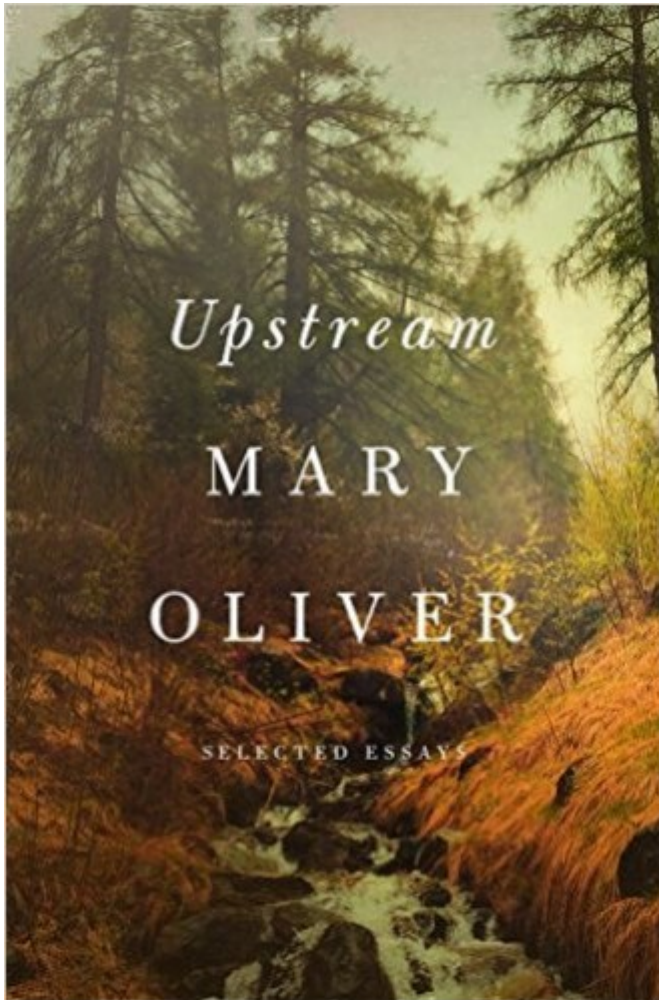


Daniel Richardson's Christmas picks

selected by [Daniel Richardson](#) in the [December 7, 2016](#) issue

## In Review



### **Upstream**

by Mary Oliver  
Penguin

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL

**Mastry**



**Mastry**

by Kerry James Marshall



## **Real**

by Lydia Loveless  
Bloodshot Records



## Running Out of Love

by Radio Dept.  
Labrador

Poet Mary Oliver continues to live a life of patient, attentive contemplation. But it's a bit of shock to find her firing off such glancing bursts of wisdom in *Upstream* (Penguin), her first book of essays in over a decade. Her detailed and personal take on the behaviors of local birds, 19th-century writers (like Emerson, Whitman, and Poe), and the inner life of a lone female spider left me ready for a more comprehensive look at her life of considered solidarity with the natural world.

After Mastry debuted at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, this landmark survey of paintings by Kerry James Marshall moved to the Met Breuer museum in Manhattan, where it will remain through early 2017. In the show and its attendant catalog, one of the most important living American painters draws on his command

of classical artistic conventions to convincingly reframe all of art history, bringing issues of contemporary African-American identity, community, and cultural history front and center for perhaps the first time.

Ohio musician Lydia Loveless continues to explore the boundaries between country and rock on her latest album, *Real* (Bloodshot Records), this time employing the more polished sounds of 1980s pop. Her lyrics navigate the fits and starts of relationships and the chaotic process of self-discovery. But her true gift is her ability to deliver deftly crafted pop hooks with a dynamic vocal twang (at times sounding like a countrified Stevie Nicks) that is at once distinctive and completely accessible.

It's been over six years since the Radio Dept.'s last LP. With the recently released *Running Out of Love* (Labrador), the band continues to conjure seductive dream pop from electronic and indie pop sounds of the 1980s and '90s (think Pet Shop Boys, New Order, Stone Roses) with lyrics that are often searing critiques of Swedish and international politics. This thoughtful, melodic music can be appreciated quickly or over the long run.

Read the other 2016 Christmas picks [here](#).