



# Beginning

**By James Wright**

The moon drops one or two feathers into the field.  
 The dark wheat listens.  
 Be still.  
 Now.  
 There they are, the moon's young, trying  
 Their wings.  
 Between trees, a slender woman lifts up the lovely shadow  
 Of her face, and now she steps into the air, now she is gone  
 Wholly, into the air.  
 I stand alone by an elder tree, I do not dare breathe  
 Or move.  
 I listen.  
 The wheat leans back toward its own darkness,  
 And I lean toward mine.

James Wright, "Beginning" from *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose*.  
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Source: *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose* (1990)

## Poet Bio



James Wright was born in Martins Ferry, Ohio. He served in the U.S. Army during the Second World War before entering Kenyon College, where he received a B.A. He went on to the University of Washington for an M.A. and Ph.D. Wright studied under John Crowe Ransom and Theodore Roethke. He worked at several universities, including the University of Minnesota—Minneapolis, Macalester College, Hunter College of the City University of New York, and State University of New York at Buffalo.

## More By This Poet

### A Blessing

By James Wright

Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota,  
Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass....

Activities

Nature

Relationships

### Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy's Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota

By James Wright

Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly,  
Asleep on the black trunk,...

Nature

## More Poems about Nature

### How to Triumph Like a Girl

By Ada Limón

I like the lady horses best,  
how they make it all look easy,...

Living

Nature

Social Commentaries

### Sestina in Prose

By Katharine Coles

It was like climbing a mountain to those of us who'd climbed one. To the others, it was like, I suppose, something else. In other words, we let everybody find her own figure of speech....

Activities

Arts & Sciences

Nature

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