



Introduction to Marie Howe. 1:06 min. Videography: Jade Cheek. Photo & Design: Raymond Elman.

# Poet Marie Howe

## Always Worth Waiting For

By Elman + Cheek

**M**arie Howe (b.1950) is an American poet born in Rochester, New York. She is the author of four volumes of poetry: *Magdalene* (W.W. Norton, 2017); *The Kingdom of Ordinary Time* (W.W. Norton, 2009); *What the Living Do* (1997); and *The Good Thief* (1988). She is also the co-editor of a book of essays, *In the Company of My Solitude: American Writing from the AIDS Pandemic* (1994). Her poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *Agni*, *Ploughshares*, *Harvard Review*, and *The Partisan Review*, among others.

In August, 2012 she was named the State Poet for New York.

Howe attended Sacred Heart Convent School and earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Windsor. She worked briefly as a newspaper reporter in Rochester and as a high school English teacher in Massachusetts. Howe did not devote serious attention to writing poetry until she turned 30. At the suggestion of an instructor in a writers' workshop, Howe applied to and was accepted at Columbia University where she studied with Stanley Kunitz and received her M.F.A. in 1983.

She has taught writing at Tufts University and Warren Wilson College. She is presently on the writing faculties at Columbia University, Sarah Lawrence College, and New York University.

Her first book, *The Good Thief*, was selected by Margaret Atwood as the winner of the 1987 Open Competition of the National Poetry Series. In 1998, she published her best-known book of poems, *What the Living Do*; the title poem in the collection is a haunting lament for her brother with the plain-spoken last line: "I am living, I remember you."

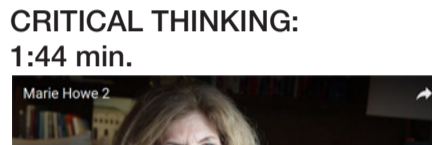
Howe's brother John died of an AIDS-related illness in 1989. "John's living and dying changed my aesthetic entirely," she has said. In 1995, Howe co-edited, with Michael Klein, a collection of essays, letters, and stories entitled *In the Company of My Solitude: American Writing from the AIDS Pandemic*.

Her honors include National Endowment for the Arts and Guggenheim fellowships.

In January 2018, Howe was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets.

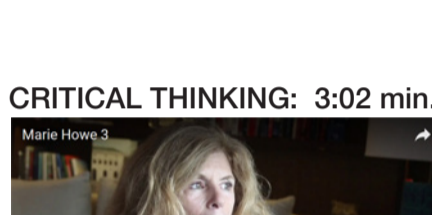
The videos below are organized by topic and run between 30 seconds and 4 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 2:09**



*When you begin to write a poem, do you have any sense of how long the poem will be?*

**CRITICAL THINKING: 1:44 min.**



*In "Magdalene," your poems are from a wide variety of perspectives. Do you consciously take on different points of view?*

**CRITICAL THINKING: 3:02 min.**



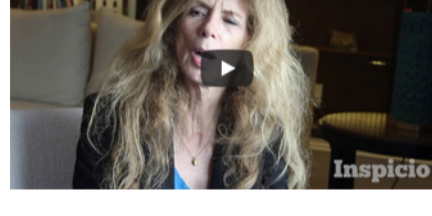
*What is your take on the idea that Mary Magdalene was the first apostle?*

**SELF-CONFIDENCE: 0:52 sec.**



*Given the themes of "Magdalene," is the current feminist and anti-harassment movement having an impact on your book sales?*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 3:11 min.**



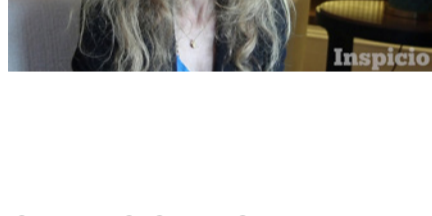
*What was your first awareness of art in any form?*

**OPEN TO CHANGE: 4:01 min.**



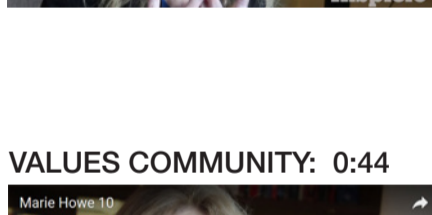
*What did you learn in college that still informs you today?*

**SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 3:48 min.**



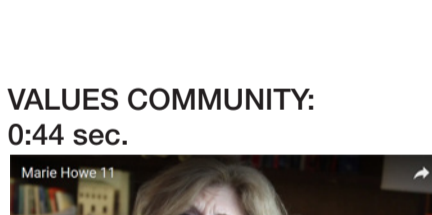
*You first encountered Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Stanley Kunitz at Columbia University. Talk about your relationship with him.*

**VALUES LEARNING PROCESS: 0:40 sec.**



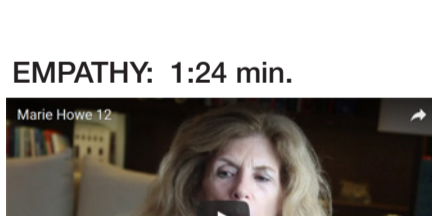
*Did you find out about the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts because Stanley Kunitz was one of the founders?*

**OPEN TO CHANGE: 1:43 min.**



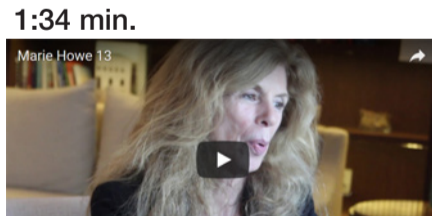
*When you applied to the Fine Arts Work Center, had you ever been to Provincetown? What was your experience at the Work Center?*

**VALUES COMMUNITY: 0:44**



*Are you familiar with Provincetown Arts magazine, which I co-founded with Chris Busa in 1985?*

**VALUES COMMUNITY: 0:44 sec.**



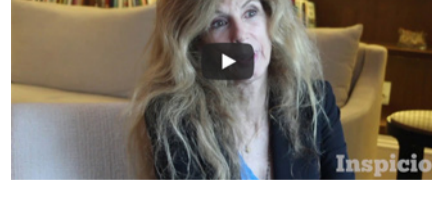
*There are blurbs on the back of "Magdalene" from three prominent writers — Nick Flynn, Michael Cunningham, Mark Doty — with connections to Provincetown.*

**EMPATHY: 1:24 min.**



*Does your teenage daughter read and engage in your poetry?*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 1:34 min.**



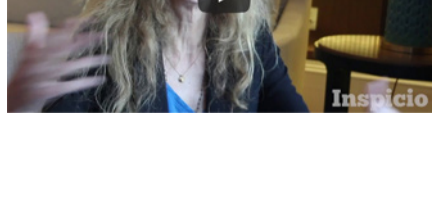
*I love the clarity, the directness, the conversational nature of your poems. They remind me of the poems of Mark Strand, Alan Dugan, and Stanley Kunitz. Did your style come out of you naturally or did you gravitate toward styles of poets you admire?*

**EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 1:41 min.**



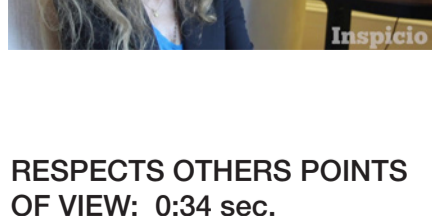
*Who are the poets you enjoy reading now?*

**VALUES LEARNING PROCESS: 2:05 min.**



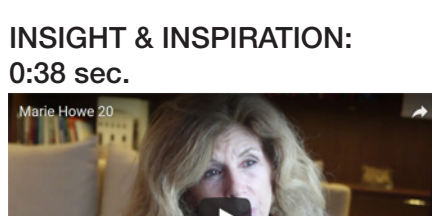
*Is there a difference in the kind of students that want to be poets now, contrasted with the group of students you went to school with?*

**PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS: 3:28 min.**



*Describe a challenging situation with a successful outcome.*

**RESILIENCE: 0:28 sec.**



*Do you work on one poem at a time or multiple poems?*

**RESPECTS OTHERS POINTS OF VIEW: 1:59 min.**



*When you are working on a poem, do ideas pop up that don't fit in the poem you are working on, so you set them aside for a different poem?*

**RESPECTS OTHERS POINTS OF VIEW: 0:34 sec.**



*It sounds like your first readers don't mince words with you.*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 0:38 sec.**



*Was the impact of film on your poetry conscious or subconscious?*

**OPEN TO CHANGE —  
FLEXIBILITY: 0:45 sec.**



*Marie Howe reads: "Magdalene at the Theopoetics Conference."*