



[Meditation at Lagunitas](#), by Robert Hass

In A Nutshell

Robert Hass is a writer who disproves the idea that people can't write great poems anymore. This is one of his best-loved works. Hass grew up in California, went to college, and pursued a graduate degree from Stanford University. He then put his head down and began to write poems until his first big break, when his work was recognized by the prestigious Yale Younger Poets Series. He has worked as a university professor, a translator, and (twice) as the Poet Laureate of the United States.

The themes in "Meditation at Lagunitas" are universal enough that the poem feels like it could be set anywhere, but upon closer inspection, the influence of Hass's native California is everywhere. From its images of birches and blackberries to its easygoing, conversational style, the poem is an example of how the places where we grow up continue to influence us throughout our lives.

"Meditation at Lagunitas" was published in 1979 as part of Hass's second collection of poems, titled *Praise*. Since then, it has been included in several anthologies of American literature, which bring together the best work by American writers. Because of his commitment to other causes, like environmentalism and his translations of Polish Nobel-laureate Czesław Miłosz's (don't even ask us how to pronounce this) poetry, Hass doesn't publish new books very often. His most recent work from 2008, *Time and Materials*, won the Pulitzer Prize in poetry.

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Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 Do you agree with Plato that there 's a more perfect spiritual world of ideas out there?
What 's the relationship between the "real" world of visible, taste-able, touchable things and the world of intellectual ideas about things?
- 2 If there 's nothing in particular that a word like "justice" refers to, then how do we know that such a thing as "justice" exists in the world?
- 3 The age-old question: blackberries, raspberries, or blueberries? Which is the best?

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