

Classic Poetry Series

**Friederike Mayröcker**  
**- poems -**

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# Friederike Mayröcker(20 December 1924)

Friederike Mayröcker (born on December 20, 1924 in Vienna) is an Austrian poet.

## <b>Life</b>

From 1946 to 1969 Mayröcker was an English teacher at several public schools in Vienna. In 1969 she took a release from working as a teacher and in 1977 she retired early. She started writing as a 15 year old. In 1946 she published her first works in the journal Plan. Friederike Mayröcker is recognized as one of the most important contemporary Austrian poets. She also had success with radio plays. Four of them she wrote together with Ernst Jandl, with whom she lived together from 1954 until his death in 2000. Mayröcker describes her working process as follows: "I live in pictures. I see everything in pictures, my complete past, memories are pictures. I transform pictures into language by climbing into the picture. I walk into it until it becomes language.

## <b>Awards</b>

1963: Theodor-Körner-Preis

1969: Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden für Fünf Mann Menschen (mit Ernst Jandl)

1975: Österreichischer Würdigungspreis für Literatur

1976: Preis der Stadt Wien für Literatur

1977: Georg-Trakl-Preis für Lyrik

1981: Anton-Wildgans-Preis

1982: Großer Österreichischer Staatspreis für Literatur

1982: Roswitha-Preis

1985: Literaturpreis des Südwestfunks Baden-Baden

1985: Ehrenmedaille der Bundeshauptstadt Wien in Gold

1987: Österreichisches Ehrenzeichen für Wissenschaft und Kunst

1989: Hans-Erich-Nossack-Preis

1993: Friedrich-Hölderlin-Preis der Stadt Bad Homburg

1994: manuskripte-Preis

1995: Jurorin bei der Verleihung des Erich-Fried-Preises an Elke Erb

1996: Else-Lasker-Schüler-Lyrikpreis

1996: Großer Literaturpreis der Bayerischen Akademie der Schönen Künste

1997: America Awards Prize

1997: Meersburger Droste-Preis

1997: ORF-Hörspielpreis

2000: Christian-Wagner-Preis

2001: Karl-Sczuka-Preis für das Hörspiel Das Couvert der Vögel

2001: Georg-Büchner-Preis  
2001: Ehrenpromotion der Universität Bielefeld  
2004: Ehrenring der Stadt Wien  
2008: Hörspiel-Kritikerpreis des ORF für Gärten, Schnäbel, ein Mirakel, ein Monolog, ein Hörspiel  
2009: Hermann-Lenz-Preis für den Gedichtband Scardanelli[4]  
2010: Peter-Huchel-Preis für dieses Jäckchen (nämlich) des Vogel Greif  
2010: Horst-Bienek-Preis für Lyrik der Bayerischen Akademie der Schönen Künste  
2011: Literaturpreis der Stadt Bremen für ich bin in der anstalt. Fusznoten zu einem nichtgeschriebenen Werk

# The Bird Coach

for Christa Kühnholz

was it chicken children lapwings letterings  
that along the pond and pastures :  
clouds lush clouds and pastures : rippling  
and where you saw 3 guys in straw yellow  
van-Gogh-hats...this innocence this indirection  
toward the lake and clattering tin bucket under overcast  
weather it was pomegranates i.e. drops out of  
a stormy sky : from the eaves  
rattling and needle instrument inexplicable  
weather instrument etc., the leek shoots and  
parapluies in the woods above geranium gardens when  
left in the rain they start  
they bleed i.e. a white umbrella as  
stuck in flowered ground : firn or  
glacier snow on mountain nape,  
chalked on the blackboard propped against the gate  
to the Greek restaurant, the menu  
starts off with some dish like GOD LAMB / LAMB  
OF GOD, in a costume of rain and herolds :  
1 black twig so bent and twisted  
i.e. broken off the tree it formed  
the poet's initial.

what do you need? a tree a house to  
weigh how great how small our human life  
gauge judge understand estimate conceive

how great how small when you look up to the tree top  
and get lost in the lush luxuriant green  
green lavish/luxuriant lush rank abundant beauty

how great how small when you think how short  
your life compared with the life of trees  
you need a tree you need a house  
not all for yourself just a corner a roof  
to sit to think to sleep to dream  
to write to be silent to see your friend

the stars grass flower sky

Translated by Rosmarie Waldrop

Friederike Mayröcker

# What do you need

what do you need? a tree a house to  
gauge how great how small our human life  
how great how small when you look up to the top of the tree  
and get lost in the lush luxuriant green  
how great how small when you think how short  
your life compared with the life of trees  
you need a tree you need a house  
not all for yourself just a corner a roof  
to sit to think to sleep to dream  
to write to be silent to see your friend  
the stars grass flower sky

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