

Kenneth Rexroth: "I consider Muriel Rukeyser by far the best poet in her exact generation -- a period of darkness and reaction to American poetry where only she, Eberhart and Patchen and a very few others spoke up for a vital personal poetry. She is an international rather than a provincial poet, and today she is a member of the contemporary generation because of her faithfulness, and those qualities which are, of course, the essential qualities of real poetry at all times everywhere."

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LOOKING AT EACH OTHER

Yes, we were looking at each other  
Yes, we knew each other very well  
Yes, we had made love with each other many times  
Yes, we had heard music together  
Yes, we had gone to the sea together  
Yes, we had cooked and eaten together  
Yes, we had laughed often day and night  
Yes, we fought violence and knew violence  
Yes, we hated the inner and outer oppression  
Yes, that day we were looking at each other  
Yes, we saw the sunlight pouring down  
Yes, the corner of the table was between us  
Yes, bread and flowers were on the table  
Yes, our eyes saw each other's eyes  
Yes, our mouths saw each other's mouth  
Yes, our breasts saw each other's breasts  
Yes, our bodies entire saw each other  
Yes, it was beginning in each  
Yes, it threw waves across our lives  
Yes, the pulses were becoming very strong  
Yes, the beating became very delicate  
Yes, the calling        the arousal  
Yes, the arriving        the coming  
Yes, there it was for both entire  
Yes, we were looking at each other

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Long afterward, Oedipus, old and blinded, walked the roads. He smelled a familiar smell. It was the Sphinx. Oedipus said, "I want to ask one question. Why didn't I recognize my mother?" "You gave the wrong answer," said the Sphinx. "But that was what made everything possible," said Oedipus. "No," she said. "When I asked, What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening, you answered, Man. You didn't say anything about woman." "When you say Man," said Oedipus, "you include women too. Everyone knows that." She said, "That's what you think."