Owls, and according to Mary Oliver, represent the terrible aspects of nature. It is a nature that "eat" (23), devours in fact, and one that kills without remorse. And yet she acknowledges that nature also contains the beautiful flowered fields that "immortalize" (53) one with their loveliness and sweet smell. Nature contains both awesome terror and awesome joy, and thus is the contradiction that this passage addresses.

One of the most obvious techniques that Oliver uses is simple listing of details - nouns and adjectives piled and heaped on top of each other, clearly emphasizing Oliver's point that nature is massive, for good or bad. The great horned owl calls eight separate kinds of animal (15-22), while the fields of poppies and lupines fill the air with an abundance of sweet smells (45-48). The fact that such great destruction and beauty exist in nature furthers Oliver's theme. 

At the same time, Oliver avoids concrete detail. She will enumerate effects of nature, but she will not describe precisely what an owl or a flower looks like, except in terms of other natural things, such as motes (17) or sand dunes (44), something that is massive and that can only be described in terms of itself. 

In addition, Oliver furthers her description of nature through the use of repetition. She repeatedly uses "it" or "they" to begin sentences, which adds to the amassment of details described above. Similarly, she is undergar
A series of very powerful effects when thinking about the fields of flowers (48-49) and uses "him" to link them together. Each of these uses of language evoke images of nature as something that takes a powerful effect much as it demands love.

The imagery in the piece adds the final touch to its effect. The great horned owl is characterized by images of night, twilight, and darkness, while the flowers are associated with "red and pink and white." It is true that other colors appear in the descriptions of other owls, but those owls represent less extreme aspects of nature. The focus of the passage is on the extreme of terror and the extreme of beauty, and on the fact that the unimaginable intensity of both makes nature as a whole "terrible" and "frightening" (54).

In short, nature is characterized as vast, and as powerful, and as very, two-sided, but always as mysterious. It is the contradictory and mysterious combination of the owl and the flower in nature that, according to Oliver, makes it so magnificent, and causes her complex feelings.