

Poem for Friday, March 26, Sixth Week of Lent:

[Ask Collins, the poem submitter, to read it aloud by heart!]

Spring

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –

When weeds in wheels shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and ring
The ear, it strikes like lightening to hear him sing;
The glassy pear tree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
Before in cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

Poem for Saturday, March 27, 6th Week of Lent:

Let's read *Second Person*, by Rae Armantrout.

Second Person

Lemons, lanterns
hang late
into the evening.

But you are known
for your voluptuous retreat,

for leaving
your absence
on the air,

illicit, thin.

I know
you think
I wonder
if you think
of me.

This reflection
spins,
a bead on a string.

I can take it with me.

—Rae Armantrout

I wish we could talk about “person.” Imaging who “you” and “I” are is key to interpreting this poem. In the first nine lines, all the personal pronouns are “second person,” “you” and “your.” In the next five lines, first and second person pronouns alternate. Skipping forward, the final line is about “me.” “I can take it with me” opposes an unspoken, “You can’t take it with you;” you can’t, but I can. Is the “I” perhaps the poem itself? Is “you” the reader or collectively, readers? The poem knows a lot about “you,” offers a relationship with you, bids you to reflect in more than one way. It’s a start; let’s try.

Poem for Sunday, March 28, Sixth Week of Lent:

I (Meredith) am seeking poems these days for help, for health, for truth-telling. Like our dog who knows where to go to crop grass when her stomach aches, I aim for the bookcase where Mary Oliver and Gerard Manley Hopkins sit comfortably side by side. Here's a Mary Oliver poem from *West Wind*; it is a help today.

Little Summer Poem Touching The Subject Of Faith

Every summer

I listen and look
under the sun's brass and even
into the moonlight, but I can't hear

anything, I can't see anything --
not the pale roots digging down, nor the green
stalks muscling up,
nor the leaves
deepening their damp pleats,

nor the tassels making,
nor the shucks, nor the cobs.
And still,
every day,

the leafy fields
grow taller and thicker --
green gowns lofting up in the night,
showered with silk.

And so, every summer,
I fail as a witness, seeing nothing --
I am deaf too
to the tick of the leaves,

the tapping of downwardness from the banyan feet --
all of it
happening
beyond any seeable proof, or hearable hum.

And, therefore, let the immeasurable come.

Let the unknowable touch the buckle of my spine.

Let the wind turn in the trees,
and the mystery hidden in the dirt

swing through the air.

How could I look at anything in this world
and tremble, and grip my hands over my heart?

What should I fear?

One morning

in the leafy green ocean

the honeycomb of the corn's beautiful body
is sure to be there.

Mary Oliver

Poem for Monday, March 29, Sixth Week of Lent:

We end this Lenten's Come-to-Jesus meeting in the mystical joy of the Beloved. Surely practicing the Presence is the Wisdom that heals, guides, and sustains us in this earth walk.

27

*Ab, Beloved,
You are the Light within
and the lantern without.
Though warring armies camp
in this same world, I seek only to
dwell in Your tent all the days of my life.
Whatever forsakenness I feel will heal
as I again behold Your Beauty.*

28

*When I did not realize I was Your Sanctuary, life was long and dark
Now knowing the Elegance of Your Presence,
I see the large Light of who I am*

29

*the voice of the Beloved
is heard upon the waters
and in the drums of thunder-beings*

*vibrations splinter glass and split trees
magic unleashed makes all things new
sometimes strike twice*

30

*I needed help
You brought healing
I was lost in shadows
You brought Light
I was mourning
You asked me to dance
I was weeping
You gave me joy*

31

*You are here with me
not far away in some foreign land
I would sink in the quicksand of shame
if You were not my Rock to hold on to*

*no substance can satisfy me
no addiction fulfill me
only You
suffering ends*

Sharon Blessum, Songs of the Beloved

Poem for Tuesday, March 30, 6th Week of Lent:

This poem focuses on our daily struggles and our constant desire to have new and more rather than thanking God for the simple things we have. Living through the Covid isolation has helped me toward appreciating the simple things in my life that bring peace. However, my peace keeps getting lost because of the awful scourge of the US with guns all around us and their too frequent use by angry, sad people to shoot our children and us.

The Want of Peace *by Wendell Berry*

All goes back to the earth,
and so I do not desire
pride of excess or power,
but the contentments made
by men who have had little:
the fisherman's silence
receiving the river's grace,
the gardener's musing on rows.
I lack the peace of simple things.
I am never wholly in place.
I find no peace or grace.
We sell the world to buy fire,
our way lighted by burning men,
and that has bent my mind
and made me think of darkness
and wish for the dumb life of roots.

Poem for Wednesday, March 31, Sixth Week of Lent:

I (Adams Wofford) believe that that keeps us going: that stubbornness, that cussedness that keeps us moving, no matter how dark things seem.

Hope *by Lisel Mueller*

It hovers in dark corners
before the lights are turned on,
it shakes sleep from its eyes
and drops from mushroom gills,
it explodes in the starry heads
of dandelions turned sages,
it sticks to the wings of green angels
that sail from the tops of maples.
It sprouts in each occluded eye
of the many-eyes potato,
it lives in each earthworm segment
surviving cruelty,
it is the motion that runs
from the eyes to the tail of a dog,
it is the mouth that inflates the lungs
of the child that has just been born.
It is the singular gift
we cannot destroy in ourselves,
the argument that refutes death,
the genius that invents the future,

all we know of God.

It is the serum which makes us swear

not to betray one another;

it is this poem trying to speak.

Poem for Thursday, April 1, 6th Week of Lent:

This poem really belongs on Palm Sunday; yet, it most belongs with Jesus in a week of losses and suffering. Perhaps, Oliver is right: the donkey loved him!

The Poet Thinks Of The Donkey

On the outskirts of Jerusalem
the donkey waited.
Not especially brave, or filled with understanding,
he stood and waited.

How horses, turned out into the meadow,
leap with delight!
How doves, released from their cages,
clatter away, splashed with sunlight.

But the donkey, tied to a tree as usual, waited.
Then he let himself be led away.
Then he let the stranger mount.

Never had he seen such crowds!
And I wonder if he at all imagined what was to happen.
Still, he was what he had always been: small, dark, obedient.

I hope, finally, he felt brave.
I hope, finally, he loved the man who rode so lightly upon him,
as he lifted one dusty hoof and stepped, as he had to, forward.

Mary Oliver

Poem for Friday, April 2, Good Friday, 6th Week of Lent:

This poem by Mary Oliver really belongs with last evening ~ a poem about his lonely time at Gethsemane. Nevertheless, I (Stephanie) offer it here, appreciating Oliver's poetic witness about how creation may have comforted Jesus in his time of abject suffering.

Gethsemane

The grass never sleeps,

Or the roses.

Nor does the lily have a secret eye that shuts until morning.

Jesus said, wait with me. But the disciples slept.

The cricket has such splendid fringe on its feet,
and it sings, have you noticed, with its whole body,
and heaven knows if it ever sleeps.

Jesus said, wait with me. And maybe the stars did, maybe
the wind wound itself into a silver tree, and didn't move,
maybe

the lake far way, where once he walked as on a
blue pavement,
lay still and waited, wild awake.

Oh the dear bodies, slumped and eye-shut, that could not
keep that vigil, how they must have wept,
so utterly human, know this too
must be a part of the story.