

Poem for Week 5 of Lent, Friday, March 19

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 heaven, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree 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 it 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 20

As you read *Care*, by Rae Armantrout, note the various voices, their individual perspectives,
their new uses for old phrases. Consider expressions of self awareness.
I dare you to ask someone you love to read *Care* with you.

Care

Dress like you care!
Eat like you care!
Care like you care!

You don't think
apples just grow on trees,
do you?

•

A fish taps a clam
against a bony knob
of coral
to crack its shell —
which demonstrates intelligence
yes, but is the fish
pleased with itself?

•

Alone in your crib,
you form syllables.
Are you happy when one
is like another?
Add yourself to yourself.
Now you have someone.

—Rae Armantrout

Poem for Sunday, March 21

I (Meredith) turned to this poem a few days ago – actually, I turned to the singing of this song a few days ago. It's the concluding song in Jim Henson's memorial service, and it gives me so much to hear it.

You can hear it at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Zzfdlxjx4Y>



If Just one Person

If just one person believes in you,
Deep enough and strong enough
Believes in you
Hard enough and long enough,
Before you knew it
Someone else will think,
“If he can do it, I can do it” –

Making it two whole people who
Believe in you,
Deep enough and strong enough
Believe in you,
Hard enough and long enough,
There's bound to be
Some other person who
Believes in making it a threesome
Making it three people you can say
Believe in me

And if three whole people,
Why not four,
And if four whole people,
Why not more – and more – and more

And then all those people
Believe in you
Deep enough and strong enough
Believe in you
Hard enough and long enough,
It stands to reason,
You yourself will start to see
What everybody sees in you,
And maybe even you
Can believe in you
Too.

Poem for Monday, March 22

In our Lenten reflections, we cannot help but continue our awareness of the immigrants at our borders, refugees everywhere in the world, and the parts of ourselves that sometimes wander in a foreign land. Poetry emerges from the writings in Psalm 137: 1-4.

137

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres. For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors' mirth, saying 'sing to us songs of Zion'. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

*willows are graceful
Babylon is beautiful
yet something in me remembers Paradise
that realm we lost when we fell into the earthplane
where peace is vulnerable
souls are seducible
forms reveal and conceal
the Formless*

Sharon Blessum, *Songs of the Beloved*

Poem for Tuesday, March 23

This poem speaks to me (Marge Miles) about the situation we have in the U.S. where our politicians and many citizens ignore the suffering of the poor (low wage jobs, inadequate housing, poor schools, hungry children, and lack of insurance for health care) and the pain minorities suffer from personal and institutional racism. I used this poem in a paper I published about the profound loneliness and socioemotional suffering of African Americans in eastern NC with HIV.

Musee des Beaux Arts

W.H. Auden, 1938

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old masters: how well they understood
It's human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;

How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Poem for Wednesday, March 24

(From Adams Wofford) The world has stopped, changed, altered during this pandemic. We have lost time and lost contact with people who mean much to us. Nature is still there and gives to us through quiet and commonplace things.

Soaking Up Sun

Today there is the kind of sunshine old men love,
the kind of day when my grandfather would sit
on the south side of the wooden corncrib where
the sunlight warmed slowly all through the day
like a wood stove. One after another dry leaves
fell. No painful memories came. Everything was
lit by a halo of light. The cornstalks glinted bright
as pieces of glass. From the fields and cottonwood
grove came the damp smell of mushrooms, of
things going back to earth. I sat with my grand-
father then. Sheep came up to us as we sat there,
their oily wool so warm to my fingers, like a strange
and magic snow. My grandfather whittled sweet
smelling apple sticks just to get at the scent. His
thumb had a permanent groove in it where the
back of the knife blade rested. He let me listen to
the wind, the wild geese, the soft dialect of sheep,
while his own silence taught me every secret thing
he knew.

-- Tom Hennen

Poem for Thursday, March 25

I (Stephanie Ford) appreciate many of the poems found in Daniel Ladinsky's *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West*. I am not sure if this poem is adapted from Rumi or another poet. Nevertheless, it speaks to the innocence and potential depth of human and animal connection. Even if it is Ladinsky's fancy, I am grateful for the moment he gives us.

LOVE DOES THAT

All day along a little burro labors, sometimes
with heavy loads on her back and sometimes just with worries
about things that bother only
burros.

And worries, as we know, can be more exhausting
than physical labor.

Once in a while a kind monk comes
to her stable and brings
a pear, but more
than that,

he looks into the burro's eyes and touches her ears

and for a few seconds the burro is free
and even seems to laugh,

because love does
that.

Love frees.