

One of the advantages of being disorderly is that one is constantly making exciting discoveries. –A.A. Milne

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do,
If bees are few.

–Emily Dickinson

Fly, Dragonfly!

Water nymph, you have
climbed from the shallows to don
your dragon-colors.
Perched on a reed stem
all night, shedding your skin, you dry
your wings in moonlight.
Night melts into day.
Swift birds wait to snap you up.
Fly, dragonfly! Fly!

–Joyce Sidman

Peace is not the product of terror or fear.
Peace is not the silence of cemeteries.
Peace is not the silent result of violent oppression
Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all
to the good of all.
Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity.
It is right and it is duty.

–Oscar Romero

*"Poetry is an act of peace. Peace goes into the making of a poet
as flour goes into the making of bread."*

– Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)

High Summer

Slow sun pulls long days
over July.
The marsh holds its breath
and soaks in warm water.
Cattails surround the pond.
Ducks and turtles load on logs.
Songs slow in the woods.
Heron stand still as gray pilings
and fish come to graze
in their shadows.
Overhead, swallows mow down
a new crop of insects.

–Warren Woessner in *Storm Lines*

*Instructions for living a life:
Pay attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it.*

–Mary Oliver

*Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean
over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you
will suddenly know everything there is to be known.*

–A.A. Milne

Fall, in Minnesota

It deceives us,
this warm, buttery air,
this displaced blaze of summer.
How is it, I wonder,
that the sumac knows to riot in red,
that the grasses put on their coppery sheaths
and the trees sigh into gold?
When was the last time
the annuals struggled into October,
dull and leggy, but blooming
nonetheless, triumphant
amid the spilled and curling leaves?

I consider all of this -
the beginnings of autumn,
beauty's finger everywhere.
This is why I live here,
this is why I live.

—Krista Rothmaler

Footnote to Autumn

Old boulders in the autumn sun and wind,
Settling a little, leaning toward the light
As if to store its summer—these remain
The earth's last gesture in the falling night.

This then is age: It is to have been worked
By the forces of frost and the unloosening sun,
It is to bear such markings fine and proud
As speak of weathers that are long since done.

By Loren Eisley

The Real Work

It may be that when we no longer know what to do
we have come to our real work,

and that when we no longer know which way to go
we have come to our real journey.

The mind that is not baffled is not employed.

The impeded stream is the one that sings.

~ Wendell Berry

The Oven Bird

There is a singer everyone has heard,
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
He says the early petal-fall is past
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers
On sunny days a moment overcast;
And comes that other fall we name the fall.
He says the highway dust is over all.
The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.
The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

—Robert Frost

*"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the
changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."*

— Maya Angelou

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean –
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down –
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts up her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her
face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

– Mary Oliver

The Wild Geese

Horseback on Sunday morning,
harvest over, we taste persimmon
and wild grape, sharp sweet
of summer's end. In time's maze
over fall fields, we name names
that went west from here, names
that rest on graves. We open
a persimmon seed to find the tree
that stands in promise,
pale, in the seed's marrow.
Geese appear high over us,

pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,
as in love or sleep, holds
them to their way, clear,
in the ancient faith: what we need
is here. And we pray, not
for new earth or heaven, but to be
quiet in heart, and in eye
clear. What we need is here.

– Mary Oliver

*Art is the unceasing effort to compete with the beauty of
flowers and never succeeding.*

–Marc Chagall

Sleep

On the ridge above Skelp Road
bears binge on blackberries and apples,
even grapes, knocking down
the Petersen's arbor to satisfy the sweet
hunger that consumes them. Just like us
they know the day must come when
the heart slows, when to take one more
step would mean the end of things
as they should be. Sleep is a drug;
dreams its succor. How better to drift
toward another world, but with leaves
falling, their warmth draping us,
our stomachs full and fat with summer?

–Todd Davis

*Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each
other, but in looking outward in the same direction.*

–Antoine de St. Exupery