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Writing Workshop, Fall 2023
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Poetry and Healing

Four Haiku
by Matsuo Basho

Spring:
A hill without a name
Veiled in morning mist.

The beginning of autumn:
Sea and emerald paddy
Both the same green.

The winds of autumn
Blow: yet still green
The chestnut husks.

A flash of lightning:
Into the gloom
Goes the heron's cry.

https://www.best-poems.net/matsuo_basho/four_haiku.html

Awake At Night
by Matsuo Basho

Awake at night--
the sound of the water jar
cracking in the cold.

https://www.best-poems.net/matsuo_basho/awake_at_night.html

sorrows
by Lucille Clifton

who would believe them winged
who would believe they could be

beautiful who would believe
they could fall so in love with mortals

that they would attach themselves
as scars attach and ride the skin

sometimes we hear them in our dreams
rattling their skulls clicking their bony fingers

envying our crackling hair
our spice filled flesh

they have heard me beseeching
as I whispered into my own

cupped hands enough not me again
enough but who can distinguish

one human voice
amid such choruses of desire

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/49797/sorrows>

won't you celebrate with me
by Lucille Clifton

won't you celebrate with me
what i have shaped into
a kind of life? i had no model.
born in babylon
both nonwhite and woman
what did i see to be except myself?
i made it up
here on this bridge between
starshine and clay,
my one hand holding tight
my other hand; come celebrate
with me that everyday
something has tried to kill me
and has failed.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50974/wont-you-celebrate-with-me>

Blessing The Boats
by Lucille Clifton

may the tide
that is entering even now
the lip of our understanding
carry you out
beyond the face of fear
may you kiss
the wind then turn from it
certain that it will
love your back may you
open your eyes to water
water waving forever
and may you in your innocence
sail through this to that

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/58816/blessing-the-boats>

“Hope” is the thing with feathers
by Emily Dickinson

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42889/hope-is-the-thing-with-feathers-314>

The Secret Garden
by Rita Dove

I was ill, lying on my bed of old papers,
when you came with white rabbits in your arms;
and the doves scattered upwards, flying to mothers,
and the snails sighed under their baggage of stone . . .
Now your tongue grows like celery between us:
Because of our love-cries, cabbage darkens in its nest;
the cauliflower thinks of her pale, plump children
and turns greenish-white in a light like the ocean's.
I was sick, fainting in the smell of teabags,
when you came with tomatoes, a good poetry.
I am being wooed. I am being conquered
by a cliff of limestone that leaves chalk on my breasts.

<https://www.best-poems.net/rita-dove/the-secret-garden.html>

My brilliant image
by Hafez

I wish I could show you
When you are lonely or in darkness,
The Astonishing Light
Of your own Being!

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/poem-of-the-day-hafezs-my-brilliant-image-c50n68mwhwj>

Encounter
by Czeslaw Milosz

We were riding through frozen fields in a wagon at dawn.
A red wing rose in the darkness.

And suddenly a hare ran across the road.
One of us pointed to it with his hand.

That was long ago. Today neither of them is alive,
Not the hare, nor the man who made the gesture.

O my love, where are they, where are they going
the flash of a hand, streak of movement, rustle of pebbles.
I ask not out of sorrow, but in wonder.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49457/encounter-56d22b901521b>

Kindness
by Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know

how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

https://poets.org/poem/kindness?gclid=Cj0KCQiA3uGqBhDdARIsAFeJ5r1Uq3nX--8liqcGsstk5c3jeM0OCovb8xqgmz127ZGJe1ZWlt-bzfWEaAiAWEALw_wcB

Starlings In Winter
by Mary Oliver

Chunky and noisy,
but with stars in their black feathers,
they spring from the telephone wire
and instantly

they are acrobats
in the freezing wind.
And now, in the theater of air,
they swing over buildings,

dipping and rising;
they float like one stippled star
that opens,
becomes for a moment fragmented,

then closes again;
and you watch
and you try
but you simply can't imagine

how they do it
with no articulated instruction, no pause,
only the silent confirmation
that they are this notable thing,

this wheel of many parts, that can rise and spin
over and over again,
full of gorgeous life.

Ah, world, what lessons you prepare for us,
even in the leafless winter,
even in the ashy city.
I am thinking now
of grief, and of getting past it;

I feel my boots
trying to leave the ground,

I feel my heart
pumping hard. I want

to think again of dangerous and noble things.
I want to be light and frolicsome.
I want to be improbable beautiful and afraid of nothing,
as though I had wings.

https://www.best-poems.net/mary_oliver/starlings_in_winter.html

Wild Geese
by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

https://www.best-poems.net/mary_oliver/wild_geese.html

The Waking
by Theodore Roethke

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do
To you and me; so take the lively air,
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.
What falls away is always. And is near.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I learn by going where I have to go.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43333/the-waking-56d2220f25315>

Although The Wind
by Izumi Shikibu

Although the wind
blows terribly here,
the moonlight also leaks
between the roof planks
of this ruined house.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48700/although-the-wind->

Theories Of Space And Time
by Natasha Trethewey

You can get there from here, though
there's no going home.
Everywhere you go will be somewhere
you've never been. Try this:

head south on Mississippi 49, one—
by—one mile markers ticking off

another minute of your life. Follow this
to its natural conclusion—dead end

at the coast, the pier at Gulfport where
riggings of shrimp boats are loose stitches

in a sky threatening rain. Cross over
the man-made beach, 26 miles of sand

dumped on a mangrove swamp—buried
terrain of the past. Bring only

what you must carry—tome of memory
its random blank pages. On the dock

where you board the boat for Ship Island,
someone will take your picture:

the photograph—who you were—
will be waiting when you return

<https://poets.org/poem/theories-time-and-space>

Full Moon
by Tu Fu

Above the tower -- a lone, twice-sized moon.
On the cold river passing night-filled homes,
It scatters restless gold across the waves.
On mats, it shines richer than silken gauze.

Empty peaks, silence: among sparse stars,
Not yet flawed, it drifts. Pine and cinnamon
Spreading in my old garden . . . All light,
All ten thousand miles at once in its light!

https://www.best-poems.net/tu_fu/full_moon.html

Lost
by David Wagoner

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you,
If you leave it you may come back again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.

<https://cih.ucsd.edu/mindfulness/mindful-poetry>

Considering the Accordion
by Al Zolynas

The idea of it is distasteful at best. Awkward box of wind, diminutive,
misplaced piano on one side, raised Braille buttons on the other. The
bellows, like some parody of breathing, like some medical apparatus from a

Victorian sick-ward. A grotesque poem in three dimensions, a rococo thing-a-me-bob. I once strapped an accordion on my chest and right away I had to lean back on my heels, my chin in the air, my back arched like a bullfighter or flamenco dancer. I became an unheard of contradiction: a gypsy in graduate school. Ah, but for all that, we find evidence of the soul in the most unlikely places. Once in a Czech restaurant in Long Beach, an ancient accordionist came to our table and played the old favorites: "Lady of Spain," "The Saber Dance," "Dark Eyes," and through all the clichés his spirit sang clearly. It seemed like the accordion floated in air, and he swayed weightlessly behind it, eyes closed, back in Prague or some lost village of his childhood. For a moment we all floated--the whole restaurant: the patrons, the knives and forks, the wine, the sacrificed fish on plates. Everything was pure and eternal, fragilely suspended like a stained-glass window in the one remaining wall of a bombed out church.

<https://joshuamichaelstewart.tripod.com/id37.html>