The Word
Tony Hoagland

Down near the bottom
of the crossed-out list
of things you have to do today,

between “green thread"
and “broccoli,” you find
that you have penciled “sunlight.”

Resting on the page, the word
is beautiful. It touches you
as if you had a friend

and sunlight were a present
he had sent from someplace distant
as this morning- to cheer you up,

and to remind you that,
among your duties, pleasure
is a thing

that also needs accomplishing.
Do you remember?
that time and light are kinds

of love, and love
is no less practical
than a coffee grinder

or a sage spare tire?
Tomorrow you may be utterly
without a clue,

but today you get a telegram
from the heart in exile,
proclaiming that the kingdom

still exists,
the king and queen alive,
still speaking to their children,

-to any one among them
who can find the time
to sit out in the sun and listen.
Awareness
John Astin

Awareness –
her gaze is so constant,
our every move
watched
with such affection,
a ceaseless vigil
without condition
or agenda,
silent,
patient,
unrelenting in her
embrace.

There is endless room in
the heart of this lover,
infinite space for whatever
foolishness we may
toss her way.

But she is also
crafty, this one –
a thief who will steal away
everything we ever cherished,
all our beliefs,
all our ideas,
all our philosophies,
until nothing is left
but her shimmering
wakefulness,

this simple love
for what is.
From Out of the Cave
Joyce Sutphen

When you have been
at war with yourself
for so many years that
you have forgotten why,
when you have been driving
for hours and only
gradually begin to realize
that you have lost the way,
when you have cut
hastily into the fabric,
when you have signed
papers in distraction,
when it has been centuries
since you watched the sun set
or the rain fall, and the clouds,
drifting overhead, pass as flat
as anything on a postcard;
when, in the midst of these
everyday nightmares, you
understand that you could
wake up,
you could turn
and go back
to the last thing you
remember doing
with your whole heart:
that passionate kiss,
the brilliant drop of love
rolling along the tongue of a green leaf,
then you wake,
you stumble from your cave,
blinking in the sun,
naming every shadow
as it slips.
Just For Me
Anna Villalobos

What if a poem were just for me?
What if I were audience enough because I am,
Because this person here is alive, is flesh,
Is conscious, has feelings, counts?
What if this one person mattered not just for what
She can do in the world
But because she is part of the world
And has a soft and tender heart?
What if that heart mattered,
if kindness to this one mattered?
What if she were not distinct from all others,
But instead connected to others in her sense of being distinct, of being alone,
Of being uniquely isolated, the one piece removed from the picture—
All the while vulnerable under, deep under, the layers of sedimentary defense.

Oh let me hide
Let me be ultimately great,
Ultimately shy,
Remove me, then I don’t have to…
be…

But I am.
Through all the antics of distinctness from others, or not-really-there-ness, I remain
No matter what my disguise—
Genius, idiot, gloriousness, scum—
Underneath, it’s still just me, still here,
Still warm and breathing and human
With another chance simply to say hi, and recognize my tenderness
And be just a little bit kind to this one as well,
Because she counts, too.
Compassion
Miller Williams

Have compassion for everyone you meet, even if they don't want it.
What appears bad manners,
an ill temper or cynicism is always a sign of things
no ears have heard, no eyes have seen.
You do not know what wars are going on
down there where the spirit meets the bone.

Taking bold poetic license, the same poem can be reinterpreted as a self-compassion poem by inserting the following italicized words - Kristin Neff

Have compassion for yourself, even if you don't want it.
What appears bad manners,
an ill temper or cynicism may be a sign of things
your ears could no longer hear,
your eyes have since overlooked
You may not know what wars are going on
down there where the spirit meets the bone.

The Guest House
Rumi

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.
Myself and My Person
Anna Swir (Swirscynska)

There are moments
when I feel more clearly than ever
that I am in the company
of my own person.
This comforts and reassures me,
this heartens me,
just as my tridimensional body
is heartened by my own authentic shadow.

There are moments
when I really feel more clearly than ever
that I am in the company of my own person.

I stop
at a street corner to turn left
and I wonder what would happen
if my own person walked to the right.

Until now that has not happened
but it does not settle the question.

Love after Love
Derek Walcott

The time will come
When, with elation,
You will greet yourself arriving
At your own door, in your own mirror
And each will smile at the other’s welcome

And say sit here. Eat
You will love again the stranger who was yourself
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
To itself, to the stranger who has loved you
All your life, whom you have ignored for another
Who knows you by heart
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf
The photographs, the desperate notes,
Peel your own image from the mirror
Sit. Feast on your life
A Brief For The Defense
Jack Gilbert

Sorrow everywhere. Slaughter everywhere. If babies are not starving somewhere, they are starving somewhere else. With flies in their nostrils. But we enjoy our lives because that's what God wants. Otherwise the mornings before summer dawn would not be made so fine. The Bengal tiger would not be fashioned so miraculously well. The poor women at the fountain are laughing together between the suffering they have known and the awfulness in their future, smiling and laughing while somebody in the village is very sick. There is laughter every day in the terrible streets of Calcutta, and the women laugh in the cages of Bombay. If we deny our happiness, resist our satisfaction, we lessen the importance of their deprivation. We must risk delight. We can do without pleasure, but not delight. Not enjoyment. We must have the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless furnace of this world. To make injustice the only measure of our attention is to praise the Devil. If the locomotive of the Lord runs us down, we should give thanks that the end had magnitude. We must admit there will be music despite everything. We stand at the prow again of a small ship anchored late at night in the tiny port looking over to the sleeping island: the waterfront is three shuttered cafés and one naked light burning. To hear the faint sound of oars in the silence as a rowboat comes slowly out and then goes back is truly worth all the years of sorrow that are to come.
The Journey
Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice--
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,....
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do--
determined to save
the only life you could save.
**Start Close In**  
David Whyte

Start close in,  
don't take the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first thing  
close in,  
the step you don't want to take.  
Start with  
the ground you know,  
the pale ground beneath your feet,  
your own way of starting  
the conversation.  
Start with your own question,  
give up on other people's questions,  
don't let them smother something simple.  
To find another's voice,  
follow your own voice,  
wait until that voice becomes a private ear listening to another.  
Start right now take a small step you can call your own don't follow someone else's heroics, be humble and focused, start close in, don't mistake that other for your own.  
Start close in, don't take the second step or the third, start with the first thing close in, the step you don't want to take.

**Belonging**  
John O'Donohue

May you listen to your longing to be free.  
May the frames of your belonging be generous enough for your dreams.  
May you arise each day with a voice of blessing whispering in your heart.  
May you find a harmony between your soul and your life.  
May the sanctuary of your soul never be haunted.  
May you know the eternal longing that lives at the heart of time.  
May there be kindness in your gaze when you look within  
May you never place walls between the light and yourself.  
May you allow the wild beauty of the invisible world to gather you,  
Mind you, and embrace you in belonging.
The Way It Is
William Stafford

There’s a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn’t change. People wonder about what you are pursuing. You have to explain about the thread. But it is hard for others to see. While you hold it you can’t get lost. Tragedies happen; people get hurt or die; and you suffer and get old. Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding. You don’t ever let go of the thread.

Saint Francis and the Sow
Galway Kinnell

The bud stands for all things, even for those things that don’t flower, for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing; though sometimes it is necessary to re-teach a thing its loveliness, to put a hand on its brow of the flower and retell it in words and in touch it is lovely until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing; as Saint Francis put his hand on the creased forehead of the sow, and told her in words and in touch blessings of earth on the sow, and the sow began remembering all down her thick length, from the earthen snout all the way through the fodder and slops to the spiritual curl of the tail, from the hard spininess spiked out from the spine down through the great broken heart to the sheer blue milken dreaminess spurting and shuddering from the fourteen teats into the fourteen mouths sucking and blowing beneath them: the long, perfect, loveliness of sow.
We waste so much energy trying to cover up who we are when beneath every attitude is the want to be loved, and beneath every anger is a wound to be healed and beneath every sadness is the fear that there will not be enough time. Our challenge each day is not to get dressed to face the world but to unglove ourselves so that the doorknob feels cold and the car handle feels wet and the kiss goodbye feels like the lips of another being, soft and unrepeatable.

One Morning

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

One morning we will wake up and forget to build that wall we've been building, the one between us the one we've been building for years, perhaps out of some sense of right and boundary, perhaps out of habit.

One morning we will wake up and let our empty hands hang empty at our sides. Perhaps they will rise, as empty things sometimes do when blown by the wind. Perhaps they simply will not remember how to grasp, how to rage.

We will wake up that morning and we will have misplaced all our theories about why and how and who did what to whom, we will have mislaid all our timelines of when and plans of what and we will not scramble to write the plans and theories anew.

On that morning, not much else will have changed. Whatever is blooming will still be in bloom. Whatever is withering will wilt. There will be fields to plow and trains to load and children to feed and work to do. And in every moment, in every action, we will feel the urge to say thank you, we will follow the urge to bow.
With That Moon Language
Hafiz

Admit something:
Everyone you see, you say to them, "Love me."
Of course you do not do this out loud, otherwise someone would call the cops.
Still, though, think about this, this great pull in us to connect.
Why not become the one who lives with a full moon in each eye
that is always saying,
with that sweet moon language,
what every other eye in this world is dying to hear?

Lost
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.

I Am Not I
Juan Ramon Jimenez
Translated by Robert Bly

I am not I.
I am this one
walking beside me whom I do not see,
whom at times I manage to visit,
and whom at other times I forget;
who remains calm and silent while I talk,
and forgives, gently, when I hate,
who walks where I am not,
who will remain standing when I die.
Unconditional
Jennifer Welwood

Willing to experience aloneness,
I discover connection everywhere;
Turning to face my fear,
I meet the warrior who lives within;
Opening to my loss,
I gain the embrace of the universe;
Surrendering into emptiness,
I find fullness without end.
Each condition I flee from pursues me,
Each condition I welcome transforms me
And becomes itself transformed
Into its radiant jewel-like essence.
I bow to the one who has made it so,
Who has crafted this Master Game.
To play it is purest delight;
To honor its form--true devotion.

Allow
Danna Faulds

There is no controlling life.
Try corralling a lightning bolt,
containing a tornado. Dam a
stream and it will create a new
channel. Resist, and the tide
will sweep you off your feet.
Allow, and grace will carry
you to higher ground. The only
safety lies in letting it all in –
the wild and the weak; fear,
fantasies, failures and success.
When loss rips off the doors of
the heart, or sadness veils your
vision with despair, practice
becomes simply bearing the truth.
In the choice to let go of your
known way of being, the whole
world is revealed to your new eyes.
The Velveteen Rabbit

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"
"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."
"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.
"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."
"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"
"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."
"I suppose you are real?" said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse might be sensitive.
But the Skin Horse only smiled.

Walking the Walk
Rumi

Keep walking, though there's no place to get to.
Don't try to see through the distances.
That's not for human beings.
Move within, but don't move the way fear makes you move.
Today, like every other day, we wake up empty & frightened.
Don't open the door to the study and begin reading.
Take down a musical instrument.
Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.
Invitation
Mary Oliver

Oh do you have time
to linger
for just a little while
out of your busy
and very important day
for the goldfinches
that have gathered
in a field of thistles
for a musical battle,
to see who can sing
the highest note,
or the lowest,
or the most expressive of mirth,
or the most tender?
Their strong, blunt beaks
drink the air
as they strive
melodiously
not for your sake
and not for mine
and not for the sake of winning
but for sheer delight and gratitude—
believe us, they say,
it is a serious thing
just to be alive
on this fresh morning
in the broken world.
I beg of you,
do not walk by
without pausing
to attend to this
rather ridiculous performance.
It could mean something.
It could mean everything.
It could be what Rilke meant, when he wrote:
You must change your life.
The Quiet Power
Tara Sophia Mohr

I walked backwards, against time and that’s where I caught the moon singing at me.
I steeped downwards, into my seat and that’s where I caught freedom waiting for me like a lilac.
I ended thought, and I ended story.
I stopped designing, and arguing, and sculpting a happy life.
I didn’t die. I didn’t turn to dust.
Instead I chopped vegetables,
and made a calm lake in me
where the water was clear and sourced and still.
And when the ones I loved came to it, I had something to give them, and it offered them a soft road out of pain.
I became beloved.
And I came to know that this was it. The quiet power.
I could give something mighty, lasting, that stopped the wheel of chaos, by tending to the river inside, keeping the water rich and deep, keeping a bench for you to visit.

Clearing
Martha Postlewaite

Do not try to save
the whole world
or do anything grandiose.
Instead, create
a clearing
in the dense forest
of your life
and wait there patiently,
until the song
that is your life falls into your own cupped hands
and you recognize and greet it.
Only then will you know
how to give yourself
to this world
so worthy of rescue.
The Rhythm
Tara Sophia Mohr

In any creative feat
(by which I mean your work, your art, your life) there will be downtimes.
Or so it seems.
Just as the earth is busy before the harvest and a baby grows before its birth,
there is no silence in you.
There is no time of nothingness.
What if,
during the quiet times,
when the idea flow is hushed and hard to find you trusted (and yes I mean trusted)
that the well was filling, the waters moving?
What if you trusted
that for the rest of eternity,
without prodding, without self-discipline,
without getting over being yourself,
you would be gifted every ounce of productivity you need? What would leave you? What would open?
And what if during the quiet times you ate great meals and leaned back to smile at the stars,
and saw them there, as they always are,
nourishing you?
There are seasons and harvest is only a fraction of one of them.
There is the rhythm that made everything.
The next time you stand in the kitchen, leaning,
the next time a moment of silence catches you there, hear it, that rhythm, and let it place a stone in your spine. Let it bring you some place beautiful.
Everything is Waiting for You
David Whyte

Your great mistake is to act the drama
as if you were alone. As if life
were a progressive and cunning crime
with no witness to the tiny hidden
transgressions. To feel abandoned is to deny
the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely,
even you, at times, have felt the grand array;
the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding
out your solo voice You must note
the way the soap dish enables you,
or the window latch grants you freedom.
Alertness is the hidden discipline of familiarity.
The stairs are your mentor of things
to come, the doors have always been there
to frighten you and invite you,
and the tiny speaker in the phone
is your dream-ladder to divinity.
Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into
the conversation. The kettle is singing
even as it pours you a drink, the cooking pots
have left their arrogant aloofness and
seen the good in you at last. All the birds
and creatures of the world are unutterably
themselves. Everything is waiting for you.
The House of Belonging
David Whyte

I awoke this morning in the gold light turning this way and that thinking for a moment it was one day like any other. But the veil had gone from my darkened heart and I thought it must have been the quiet candlelight that filled my room, it must have been the first easy rhythm with which I breathed myself to sleep, it must have been the prayer I said speaking to the otherness of the night. And I thought this is the good day you could meet your love, this is the black day someone close to you could die.

This is the day you realize how easily the thread is broken between this world and the next and I found myself sitting up in the quiet pathway of light, the tawny close-grained cedar burning round me like fire and all the angels of this housely heaven ascending through the first roof of light the sun has made. This is the bright home in which I live, this is where I ask my friends to come, this is where I want to love all the things it has taken me so long to learn to love. This is the temple of my adult aloneness and I belong to that aloneness as I belong to my life. There is no house like the house of belonging.
The Art of Disappearing
Naomi Shihab Nye

When they say Don't I know you? say no.

When they invite you to the party remember what parties are like before answering. Someone telling you in a loud voice they once wrote a poem. Greasy sausage balls on a paper plate. Then reply.

If they say We should get together say why?

It's not that you don't love them anymore. You're trying to remember something too important to forget. Trees. The monastery bell at twilight. Tell them you have a new project. It will never be finished.

When someone recognizes you in a grocery store nod briefly and become a cabbage. When someone you haven't seen in ten years appears at the door, don't start singing him all your new songs. You will never catch up.

Walk around feeling like a leaf. Know you could tumble any second. Then decide what to do with your time.
Fire
Judy Brown

What makes a fire burn
is space between the logs,
a breathing space.
Too much of a good thing,
too many logs
packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.

So building fires
requires attention
to the spaces in between,
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build
open spaces
in the same way
we have learned
to pile on the logs,
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and absence of the fuel
together, that make fire possible.

We only need to lay a log
lightly from time to time.
A fire
grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings
in which the flame
that knows just how it wants to burn
can find its way.
We Who Are Your Closest Friends
Phillip Lopate, 1943

we who are
your closest friends
feel the time
has come to tell you
that every Thursday
we have been meeting
as a group
to devise ways
to keep you
in perpetual uncertainty
frustration
discontent and
torture
by neither loving you
as much as you want
nor cutting you adrift

your analyst is
in on it
plus your boyfriend
and your ex-husband
and we have pledged

to disappoint you
as long as you need us
in announcing our
association
we realize we have
placed in your hands
a possible antidote
against uncertainty
indeed against ourselves
but since our Thursday nights
have brought us
to a community of purpose
rare in itself
with you as
the natural center
we feel hopeful you
will continue to make
unreasonable
demands for affection
if not as a consequence
of your
disastrous personality
then for the good of the collective

Halleluiah
Mary Oliver

Everyone should be born into this world happy
and loving everything.
But in truth it rarely works that way.
For myself, I have spent my life clamoring toward it.
Halleluiah, anyway that I’m not where I started!

And have you too been trudging like that, sometimes
almost forgetting how wondrous the world is
and how miraculously kind some people can be?
And have you decided that probably nothing important
is ever easy?
Not, say, for the first sixty years.

Halleluiah, I’m sixty now, and even a little more,
and some days I feel I have wings.
**Self Portrait**  
David Whyte

It doesn’t interest me if there is one God or many gods.  
I want to know if you belong or feel abandoned.  
If you know despair or can see it in others.  
I want to know if you are prepared to live in the world with its harsh need to change you. If you can look back with firm eyes saying this is where I stand. I want to know if you know how to melt into that fierce heat of living falling toward the center of your longing. I want to know if you are willing to live, day by day, with the consequence of love and the bitter unwanted passion of your sure defeat. I have heard, in that fierce embrace, even the gods speak of God.

**Forget about enlightenment**  
John Welwood

Sit down wherever you are  
And listen to the wind singing in your veins.  
Feel the love, the longing, the fear in your bones.  
Open your heart to who you are, right now, not who you would like to be, not the saint you are striving to become, but the being right here before you, inside you, around you. All of you is holy.  
You are already more and less than whatever you can know.  
Breathe out, touch in, let go.
Today I asked my body what she needed
Hollie Holden

Today I asked my body what she needed
Which is a big deal
Considering my journey of
Not Really Asking That Much

I thought she might need more water.
Or protein.
Or greens.
Or yoga.
Or supplements.
Or movement.

But as I stood in the shower
Reflecting on her stretch marks,
Her roundness where I would like flatness,
Her softness where I would like firmness,
All those conditioned wishes
That form a bundle of
Never-Quite-Right-Ness.
She whispered very gently:

Could you just love me like this?
When Death Comes
Mary Oliver

When death comes
like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measle-pox;
when death comes, like an iceberg between shoulder blades,
I want to step through the door of curiosity, wondering;
what is it going to be like, that cottage
of darkness?
And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea, and I consider eternity as another
possibility, and I think of each life as a flower, as common as a field daisy, and as
singular,
and each name a comfortable music
in the mouth,
tending, as all music does, toward silence,
and each body a lion of courage, and something precious to the earth.
When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world
into my arms.
When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real. I don't want to find myself
sighing
and frightened,
or full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.
Just Beyond Yourself
David Whyte

Just beyond yourself.
It’s where you need to be.
Half a step into self-forgetting
and the rest restored
by what you’ll meet.
There is a road always beckoning.
When you see the two sides of it
closing together at that far horizon
and deep in the foundations
of your own heart
at exactly the same time,
that’s how you know it’s where you have to go.
That’s how you know it’s the road you have to follow.
That’s how you know you have to go.
That’s how you know. It’s just beyond yourself, and it’s where you need to be.
The Spirit Likes to Dress Up
Mary Oliver

The spirit
likes to dress up like this:
ten fingers,
ten toes,

shoulders, and all the rest
at night
in the black branches,
in the morning

in the blue branches
of the world.
It could float, of course,
but would rather

plumb rough matter.
Airy and shapeless thing,
it needs
the metaphor of the body,

lime and appetite,
the oceanic fluids;
it needs the body’s world,

and imagination
and the dark hug of time,
sweetness
and tangibility,
to be understood,
to be more than pure light
that burns
where no one is —

so it enters us —
in the morning
shines from brute comfort
like a stitch of lightning;

and at night
lights up the deep and wondrous
drownings of the body
like a star.
What the Body Says
Mary Oliver

I was born here, and
I belong here, and
I will never leave.
The blue heron's
gray smoke will flow over me
for years
and the wind will decide
all directions
until I am safely and entirely
something else.
I am thinking this
this winter morning...
of transformation
Of course
I wonder about
the mystery
that is surely up there
in starry space
and how some part of me
will go there at last.
But I am talking now
of the way the body speaks,
and the wind, that keeps saying,
firmly, lovingly:
a little while and then this body
will be stone; then
it will be water; then
it will be air.
Last Night As I Was Sleeping
Antonio Machado

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a spring was breaking
out in my heart.
I said: Along which secret aqueduct,
Oh water, are you coming to me,
water of a new life
that I have never drunk?

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that I had a beehive
here inside my heart.
And the golden bees
were making white combs
and sweet honey
from my old failures.

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a fiery sun was giving
light inside my heart.
It was fiery because I felt
warmth as from a hearth,
and sun because it gave light
and brought tears to my eyes.

Last night as I slept,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that it was God I had
here inside my heart.
Autobiography in Five Short Chapters
Portia Nelson

I.
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes me forever to find a way out.
II.
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place
but, it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.
III.
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
my eyes are open
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.
IV.
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.
V.
I walk down another street.
Embracing Formal Practice: Tasting Mindfulness
Jon Kabat-Zinn

Have you ever had the experience of stopping so completely?
of being in your body so completely,
of being in your life so completely
that you knew and what you didn’t know
that what had been and what was yet to come,
and the way things are right now
no longer held even the slightest hint of anxiety or discord?
It would be a moment of complete presence, beyond striving,
beyond mere acceptance,
beyond the desire to escape or fix anything or plunge ahead,
a moment of pure seeing, pure feeling,
a moment in which life simply is,
and that “isness” grabs you by all your senses,
all your memories, by all your very genes,
by your loves, and
welcomes you home

If You Would Grow - Shine the Light Of Loving Self-Care On Yourself
Daniel F. Mead

If you would grow to your best self
Be patient, not demanding
Accepting, not condemning
Nurturing, not withholding
Self-marveling, not belittling
Gently guiding, not belittling and punishing
For you are more sensitive than you know
Mankind is as tough as war yet delicate as flowers
We can endure agonies but we open fully only to warmth and light
And our need to grow Is as fragile as a fragrance dispersed by storms of will
To return only when those storm are still
So, accept, respect, and attend your sensitivity
A flower cannot be opened with a hammer.
**Lingering in Happiness**  
Mary Oliver

After rain after many days without rain,  
it stays cool, private and cleansed, under the trees,  
and the dampness there, married now to gravity,  
falls branch to branch, leaf to leaf, down to the ground  
where it will disappear - but not, of course, vanish  
except to our eyes. The roots of the oaks will have their share,  
and the white threads of the grasses, and the cushion of moss;  
a few drops, round as pearls, will enter the mole’s tunnel;  
and soon so many small stones, buried for a thousand years,  
will feel themselves being touched.

**“Important”**  
Helen M. Luke

"We hurry through the so-called boring things  
in order to attend to that which we deem  
more important, interesting.  
Perhaps the final freedom will be a recognition that  
everything in every moment is "essential"  
and that nothing at all is “important.”"
Framework for Longevity
Michael J. Castori

What is the secret of Longevity
Invest in bonds
Bond with love
Parental marital filial people spiritual
Love thy neighbor as thyself
No greater love hath man
Than he give up his life for another
Bond with nature
With its broad range of animal plant and mineral life
With its sun moon stars land sea and air
And all the creatures thereon and therein
With its solitude music challenge reverence
Bond with a positive mindset
Aim high and you won’t hit low
If things go your way don’t get too high
If things go against you don’t get too low
Bond with an upbeat lifestyle
Engage in spiritual intellectual social recreational pursuits
That guarantee health strength and daily bread
Woo the positive spurn the negative
Bond with existence
An existence that you deem worthy of your worship
Daily lift up some thought word and deed
To Him to Her to It
On each future birthday
Check your investments
If you can look at each bond and say
“Been there Done that”
You will end up dancing on the top rung
Of Longevity’s ladder
Now is the time to know
Hafiz

Now is the time to know
That all that you do is sacred.
Now, why not consider
A lasting truce with yourself and God?
Now is the time to understand
That all your ideas of right and wrong
Were just a child's training wheels
To be laid aside
When you can finally live
with veracity
And love.
Now is the time for the world to know
That every thought and action is sacred.
That this is the time
For you to compute the impossibility
That there is anything
But Grace.
Now is the season to know
That everything you do
Is Sacred

On Commitment
By William H. Murray

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:
Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it!
Sweet Darkness
David Whyte

When your eyes are tired
the world is tired also.
When your vision has gone
no part of the world can find you.
Time to go into the dark
where the night has eyes
to recognize its own.
There you can be sure
you are not beyond love.
The dark will be your womb tonight.
The night will give you a horizon
further than you can see.
You must learn one thing.
The world was made to be free in.
Give up all the other worlds
except the one to which you belong.
Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet
confinement of your aloneness to learn
anything or anyone that does not bring you alive
is too small for you.