

Call to Worship

Wild Geese by Mary Oliver (read by Patty Carlisle)

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.

Chalice Poem 2020 by Barry Hacker

I thought I'd share musings from my heart
But to tell you the truth, I don't know where to start
I really don't have too much to share
With all of you Zoomlanders who are sitting out there

But if you want to know a little something, I guess now here's my chance
To share with you a little secret...I'm not wearing any pants
Yeah, I know I may be in the minority
But hey, fashion on Zoom is not a priority

So, as I sit here before you, I have no complaint
Things are what they are and they ain't what they ain't
I'm just trying each day to keep my sanity
As I avoid both Fox and Hannity

Now let me get back to what's on my mind
Which is basically just thoughts of the nothing kind
I try to be creative to help make the time pass

Avoiding wasting time all day just sitting on my...butt
Excuse my constant rambling of thoughts that don't mean nothing
As I speak in double negatives, the sound of which is haunting
I wish I could share with all of you some poetic words of eloquence
But I fear these words out of my mouth have minimal significance

So, as I sit here before you, with nothing on my mind
I just hope my words all come together with some rhythm and some rhyme

If not, please know, that I gave it my best

As I try to get meaningless words off of my chest

You see, I was told to just write whatever "It's all up to you"

They said "Say what you want and stop when you're through"

But they also said "No matter how clever may be your endeavor

Whatever you do, oh dear lord, please, don't you dare go on forever"

You see, I have no topic actually

No theme for my written poetry

Their mandate was, don't make a scene

And for heaven's sake, please keep it clean

So I sit here contemplating

Exactly what I should be saying

To all of you who are sitting there

On your couch or in your comfy chair

Well, there you have it, empty words from my heart

I'm sorry if they all didn't come out very smart

I can't draw any wisdom from some power above

I'm just doing my best to spread some laughter and love.



On Writing Poems by Julia Fogel

Sometimes poems

Slip from the soul

Asking to be written lest they be forgotten.

Sometimes they stay hidden

And cannot

Be coaxed to come.

“Recovered Memory” by Ralph Peters

It wasn't Tristan and Isolde.
Or Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton. [Or Sartre and de Beauvoir.]
Hell - it wasn't even Scott and Zelda (except maybe for the crazy parts).
And there wasn't any racing in the streets on hot summer nights,
Not a Chevy big block or Holley carburetor in the bunch.
But we did sit on the hood of our cars in the dark.
Laughing and drinking and talking to all hours,
Serenaded by crickets and chaperoned by fireflies.
And this being upstate New York, the porch screen door did slam.
With trips to the Sherkston Quarry at midnight.
Spring-fed, blacker than the night; water cold enough to stop a beating heart.
Were our sins washed away by that bracing quarry water?
Unlikely.
Our sins were already set in like grass stains.
Or blood stains.
By mid-August, signs already appearing - the warp and weft starting to fray.
Things happen.
Things change.
People change.
To paraphrase William Butler Yeats, when the center will not hold, mere indifference is
Unleashed.
People come from different sets of circumstances.
By Summer's end, stick a fork in it. It was done.
Back to school. Back to jobs. Back to old boyfriends and new girlfriends.
The onward rush of time closed over the past.
Swallowed memories like Jonah's whale.
Like shoveled dirt covers a coffin.
The End.

Pandemic by Lynn Ungar 3/11/20 (Read by Kristine Motlagh)

*What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath —
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world*

different than it is.

*Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.*

Center down.

*And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.*

*Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.*

(You could hardly deny it now.)

*Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.*

(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

*Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.*

*Promise this world your love —
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.*

Quiet by Karen Feeney

At times I imagine this is what heaven is like ...

Quiet still water
of a light crystal hue
a huge expanse of sky
painted a much darker blue.

The sun beats down
caressing my face
I imagine this to be god
with his warm strong embrace.

Trees that are silent
except for a moment of wind

bringing them to life
as they dance and they bend.
Birds floating by
sometimes pausing to drink
hummingbirds suckle
on flowers of purple and pink.
Butterflies make me smile
as they playfully flutter by
orange and yellow bursts of color
against the canvas of sky.
No other sound
but a bird chirping with glee
I imagine this to be heaven
where else can it be?
Quiet and peaceful moments
god let me remember these
let me be as calm and tranquil
as the stillness of the trees.

Moonset by Marilyn Alberts

Sunsets get all the attention.
Grandstanding swashes of crimson,
Blatant blazes of neon orange,
Clouds gleaming gold flames. Etcetera.
No sense of modesty at all.

I had a poster once, covered
Half the dorm room wall. A photo
Shot through the Golden Gate's cables
Of the San Francisco skyline
Bathed in a furious riot of color.

Now wait---that had to have been
Taken from a Marin hillside looking
East. Not a sunset at all
But a grandiose morning display
Decorating the East Bay ridgeline.
So much for quick assumptions.

In a long life I have seen only one

Moonset, a miraculous blessing
Quite different from its counterpart.
The sky turned from gray, ripening
Into a gentle blue surrounded by
Quiet pink clouds, an opalescent
Pearl, holding all things in its heart,
As the serene moon slid silently
Into the embracing waters of dawn.

IMPROVISE by Ethel Anderson (read by her son Don Anderson)

Our Pioneers with lack of cash
And lack of training, too.
With pluck and courage, got work done,
They learned the meaning of that word
To "Improvise"

And women also learned the trick
To make do when in need.
When storming out, and cupboards bare,
They'd whisk up meals for each to share.
They'd Improvise

A cardboard box when glass broke out
Warm quilts from worn out clothes.
The flour sack had many roles
Our Pioneers achieved their goals!
By Improvise

Old Photos by Julia Fogel

Old photos in a basket,
Images of souls long gone
Erect and stiff-bodied, eyes staring,
Hoping to be remembered.
Have you no one to honor your existence?

Hard Times Come Again No More – composed by Mavis Staples

(Sung by Tom Carlstrom)

Let us pause in life's pleasures and count its many tears
While we all sup sorrow with the poor
There's a song that will linger forever in our ears
Oh, hard times, come again no more
'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary
Hard times, hard times, come again no more
Many days you have lingered around my cabin door
Oh, hard times, come again no more
While we seek mirth and beauty and music, light and gay
There are frail forms fainting at the door
Though their voices are silent, their pleading looks will say
Oh, hard times, come again no more
'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary
Hard times, hard times, come again no more
Many days you have lingered all around my cabin door
Oh, hard times, come again no more
'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary
Hard times, hard times, come again no more
Many days you have lingered all around my cabin door
Oh, hard times, come again no more
So many days you have lingered around my cabin door
Oh, hard times, come again no more ... Oh, hard times ...

Child's World by Karen Feeney

There are places in my heart
That I have yet to find
there are places in my dreams
that exist only in my mind
A place alive with happiness
where children make the rules
A world free from prejudice
which is only taught by fools.
A child will learn to love
unless he's taught otherwise
A Child will grow up honest
unless we fill his world with lies.
A child is only that

A being like you or me
we can destroy who he becomes
or who he wishes to be.
A child knows nothing different
than that of which he sees
we can teach him love or hatred
and distort what he believes ...
The world is not a kind place
Does anyone love his brother?
A child would never question this
if he didn't learn it from another.

Beannacht by John O'Donohue (read by Dez March)

For Josie

On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.

And when your eyes
freeze behind
the gray window
and the ghost of loss
gets in to you,
may a flock of colors,
indigo, red, green
and azure blue
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,

may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.

Dreams by Langston Hughes (read by Audrey Marsh)

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Santilla Shores by Debi Streett-Idell - 8th May 2020

I float
Watching a leaf spinning from its stem
Attached like a reluctant soul
unexpectedly demanded to depart,
Like a withered anthem dispossessed of voice.

How is this day different?
Murder hangs in this blue sky
Invisibly sluicing through air or
at the end of a rifle hidden by a pickup truck,
though now visible to the world.

Linda Ronstadt sings “guess I’ll hang my tears out to dry”
A bare breeze slides clouds across the sky
And spins the leaf again.
I watch and
I float.

One Voice composed and sung by John Schulz

We sing with one voice,
We feel with one heart
Tho' apart, we are aware
Of this one hope that unites us,
And the love in which we share.

Tho' the miles might work to keep us apart,
My heart remembers you
Light a candle in the window tonight,
A flame for me,
A flame for you

There are times I can feel so alone,
Despair outside my door
I just remember the touch of your hand,
And I'm not afraid, anymore

We sing with one voice,
We feel with one heart
Tho' apart, we are aware
Of this one hope that unites us,
And the love in which we share.

When This Is Over

--from Laura Kelly Fanucci (read by Carol Molek)

When this is over,
may we never again take for granted:
A handshake with a stranger, full shelves at the store,
Conversations with neighbors,
A crowded theater, Friday night out,
The taste of communion, a routine checkup,
The school rush each morning, coffee with a friend,
The stadium roaring, each deep breath! A boring Tuesday. Life itself.
When this ends, may we find that we have become more like the people
we wanted to be, we were called to be, we hope to be,
and may we stay that way —
better for each other because of the worst.

