



When Death Comes, by 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 measles-pox when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades, I want to step through
the door full 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. --Mary Oliver