

August 10, 2020

The Atlantic Magazine suggested some poetry for “Fraught Times” and I will offer one of two for you to consider in these fraught times we are sharing, my friends.

“In Blackwater Woods” by Mary Oliver

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars
of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,
the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders
of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is
nameless now.

Every year
everything
I have ever learned
in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side
is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.

To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it
against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

It is a sobering thought to seriously consider the passing of time but whether or not we consider it, it is passing. Now, one of the great teaches of Jesus Christ that has frequently gotten lost is this idea that while time does pass the love that inhabited that time does not because each and every person is an image of God, which is the “word” that I use to describe the reality, the Real Presence of a Love that does not ever abandon us, ever.

Mary Oliver is a wonderful poet of the heart and the spirit, she is dead now, and I think that she considered herself to be a non-believer and it would be presumptuous of me to claim anything in regard to her belief or non-belief but I can only see in that act of letting go, that awful, painful, terrible act of letting go of those and what we might love as the entry into Love because that is all that is left.