

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