



## **Spiritual Poetry Meetup**

*Poems to take home with you*

*November 21, 2020*

*Bow Down in Silence – Osho*

*Listen – Federico García Lorca / Listen – Jack Kerouac*

*Undress Our Names (Quote) – Octavio Paz*

*Septuagesima – John Burnside*

*Thanksgiving Eve, 1984 – Albert Huffstickler*

*Turning People into Trees – Ram Dass*

*I Dreamed I Lived in Austin – Albert Huffstickler*

*Two Poems by Mary Oliver (Talking with Percy)*

*Thanksgiving Poem – Marge Ackley*

*You Are Part of This Place (Quote) – Craig Foster*



*The next Spiritual Poetry Meetup will be Saturday December 19, 2020*



## **Bow Down in Silence**

Bow down in silence to the earth,  
to the trees, to the moon, to the sun.  
It does not matter what the object is,  
what matters is bowing down –  
surrender, that feeling of gratitude.

Wherever one is full of gratitude,  
there is a temple.

**—Osho**

## **Listen**

Listen, my child, to the silence.  
An undulating silence,  
a silence  
that turns valleys and echoes slippery,  
that bends foreheads  
toward the ground.

**—Federico García Lorca**

Listen to the silence inside the illusion of the world.

**—Jack Kerouac**

To love is to undress our names. —Octavio Paz

## Septuagesima

*Nombres.  
Estan sobre la patina  
de las cosas.  
-- Jorge Guillen*

I dream of the silence  
the day before Adam came  
to name the animals,

The gold skins newly dropped  
from God's bright fingers, still  
implicit with the light.

A day like this, perhaps:  
a winter whiteness  
haunting the creation,

as we are sometimes  
haunted by the space  
we fill, or by the forms

we might have known  
before the names,  
beyond the gloss of things.

—**John Burnside**

from *Feast Days*

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Excerpt from a commentary at ReadySteadyBook.com: “Septuagesima is the name given to the third from last Sunday before Lent in the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. Known among the Greeks as *Sunday of the Prodigal*, the title is taken from the *Gospel of Luke's* famous *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*, (chapter 15, verses 11-32), which customarily is read on the day.”

Alfred Huffstickler  
Thanksgiving Eve, 1984

## THANKSGIVING EVE

That stranger bearing your name  
is following you.

He is walking in your shadow  
down the street,

listening to your silences,  
tuning in on your prayers.

He is waiting for you  
to sense him and turn.

Then he will turn  
and you will follow him  
back to the place where you come from,  
back to the place that was home  
before home was anyplace.



When you go out into the woods, and you look at trees, you see all these different trees. And some of them are bent, and some of them are straight, and some of them are evergreens, and some of them are whatever.

And you look at the tree and you allow it. You see why it is the way it is. You sort of understand that it didn't get enough light, and so it turned that way. And you don't get all emotional about it. You just allow it. You appreciate the tree.

The minute you get near humans, you lose all that. And you are constantly saying 'You are too this, or I'm too this.' That judgment mind comes in.

And so I practice turning people into trees.

Which means appreciating them just the way they are.

**—Ram Dass**

<http://peacefullpresence.blogspot.com/>

## *I Dreamed I Lived in Austin*

I dreamed I lived in Austin.  
I was fifty-four  
with legs like a sparrow  
and a hungry heart.  
I was looking for God  
but kept finding people—  
strange little people  
with pieces of their bodies missing:  
an arm, a leg, a nose, a belly button.  
They kept offering me ham sandwiches  
and telling me I was going to die.  
I'd already died, I told them,  
chewing mightily and wishing I  
had some water.

That was just a preview, they said.  
Next time, you'll *really* die.  
And they marched ahead of me,  
flip-flop, as I combed the streets  
searching for God.

Suddenly it was night  
and I was standing on the edge of town  
alone.

A cold moon shone over me  
and the lights of a little café  
gleamed down the road.  
An old man wobbled up to me and said,  
"Well, here I am."  
"God?" I asked.

"Who else? Got a quarter?"  
"Yes." I gave it to him.  
"Let's make it to that diner," he said.  
"Refills are free.

I'll tell you anything you want."  
"For just a quarter?" I asked  
God chuckled. "Got a cigarette?"  
I gave him one.

We made it to the Café and ordered coffee,  
hunched in a booth in the warm room,  
the lights soft and comforting.  
"Anything special you want?" God asked,  
taking another cigarette from the pack  
and lighting it with my Bic.  
"Love," I said. I started to cry.  
"O.K.," he said, patting my arm  
with a boney hand.

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The room vanished and once more  
I was in Austin. I was fifty-four  
with legs like a sparrow  
and a hungry heart.

She stood before me, eyes  
misty and tender.  
"God sent me," she said.  
"I know."

She offered me a ham sandwich  
and told me I was going to die.  
"But not for a while," she said  
and took my arm.  
"Good enough," I said.  
"I'm not going to die for a while,  
I have you,

And God owes me a quarter  
And two cigarettes and"—  
I felt in my pockets—  
"a Bic lighter.

Would you like to hear  
what I dreamed last night?  
"Yes."

"Well, I dreamed I lived in Austin.  
I was fifty-four  
I was looking for God  
but kept finding people."  
"And love," she added.  
"Yes, love," I agreed.

"I think it's a set," she said.



## Two Poems by Mary Oliver

### I Ask Percy How I Should Live My Life

Love, love, love, says Percy.  
And hurry as fast as you can  
along the shining beach, or the rubble, or the dust.

Then, go to sleep.  
Give up your body heat, your beating heart.  
Then, trust.



Emerson, I am trying to live,  
as you said we must, the examined life.  
But there are days I wish  
there was less in my head to examine,  
not to speak of the busy heart. How  
would it be to be Percy, I wonder, not  
thinking, not weighing anything, just jumping forward.

**from *Percy, Waiting for Ricky***

<https://readalittlepoetry.wordpress.com/2012/12/25/i-ask-percy-how-i-should-live-my-life-by-mary-oliver/>  
<http://transit-notes.blogspot.com/2014/01/always-hedonist.html>

## Thanksgiving Poem



We offer gratitude to and for all friends  
Who create, remake and refine one another;  
Who point to stars and keep us from the dark;  
Who help us hear the music in the silent places ...  
Who hold us and will not let us go.

**—Marge Ackley**

<http://lindacowardpottery.blogspot.com/2009/11/thanksgiving-poem-by-marge-ackley.html>  
With thanks to <https://peacefullpresence.blogspot.com/2020/05/for-debbie-and-marlene.html>





You are part of this place, not a visitor.  
- Craig Foster

from the film, *My Octopus Teacher*

