



## *Spiritual Poetry Meetup*

*Poems to take home with you*

*January 19, 2025*

*Matins – Morning Prayer – John O’Donohue*

*At Fourth and Main in Liberal, Kansas – William Stafford*

*The Morning – W.S. Merwin*

*Starting Here – William Stafford*

*The Astonishing Reality of Things – Fernando Pessoa*

*It Happens – Pablo Neruda*

*Sunset – Rainer Maria Rilke*



To join the Spiritual Poetry Meetup Group, go to

<https://www.meetup.com/Spiritual-Poetry-Meetup-International/>

For more Take-Home Poetry Packs, assorted poems, and the Intrinsic Heart blog, go to

<https://intrinsicheart.com>

# Matins

*~Morning Prayer~  
by John O'Donohue*

1

Somewhere, out at the edges, the night  
Is turning and the waves of darkness  
Begin to brighten the shore of dawn

The heavy dark falls back to earth  
And the freed air goes wild with light,  
The heart fills with fresh, bright breath  
And thoughts stir to give birth to color.

2

I arise today

In the name of Silence  
Womb of the Word,  
In the name of Stillness  
Home of Belonging,  
In the name of the Solitude  
Of the Soul and the Earth.

I arise today

Blessed by all things,  
Wings of breath,  
Delight of eyes,  
Wonder of whisper,  
Intimacy of touch,  
Eternity of soul,  
Urgency of thought,  
Miracle of health,  
Embrace of God.

May I live this day

Compassionate of heart,  
Clear in word,  
Gracious in awareness,  
Courageous in thought,  
Generous in love.



## **At Fourth and Main in Liberal, Kansas, 1932**

by William Stafford  
(Written August 27, 1993.)

An instant sprang at me, a winter instant,  
a thin gray panel of evening. Slanted  
shadows leaned from a line of trees where rain  
had slicked the sidewalk. No one was there--  
it was only a quick flash of a scene,  
unplanned, without any connection to anything  
that meant more than itself, but I carried it  
onward like a gift from a child who knows  
that the giving is what is important, the paper, the ribbon,  
the holding of breath and surprise, the friends around,  
and God holding it out to you, even a rock  
or a slice of evening, and behind it the whole world.

[Photo by Gary Ellis on Unsplash](#)

## The Morning



Would I love it this way if it could last  
would I love it this way if it  
were the whole sky the one heaven  
or if I could believe that it belonged to me  
a possession that was mine alone  
or if I imagined that it noticed me  
recognized me and may have come to see me  
out of all the mornings that I never knew  
and all those that I have forgotten  
would I love it this way if I were somewhere else  
or if I were younger for the first time  
or if these very birds were not singing  
or I could not hear them or see their trees  
would I love it this way if I were in pain  
red torment of body or gray void of grief  
would I love it this way if I knew  
that I would remember anything that is  
here now anything anything

W.S. Merwin  
from *Garden Time*  
Photo by Larry Cameron



Starting here, what do you want to remember?  
How sunlight creeps along a shining floor?  
What scent of old wood hovers, what softened  
sound from outside fills the air?

Will you ever bring a better gift for the world  
than the breathing respect that you carry  
wherever you go right now? Are you waiting  
for time to show you some better thoughts?

When you turn around, starting here, lift this  
new glimpse that you found; carry into evening  
all that you want from this day. This interval you spent  
reading or hearing this, keep it for life --

What can anyone give you greater than now,  
starting here, right in this room, when you turn around?

~ William Stafford  
from *The Way It Is: New & Selected Poems*

## **The Astonishing Reality of Things**

**The astonishing reality of things  
Is my discovery every day.  
Each thing is what it is,  
And it's hard to explain to someone how happy this  
makes me,  
And how much this suffices me.**

**All it takes to be complete is to exist.**

**I've written quite a few poems,  
I'll no doubt write many more,  
And this is what every poem of mine says,  
And all my poems are different,  
Because each thing that exists is a different way of saying this.**

**Sometimes I start looking at a stone.  
I don't start thinking about whether it exists.  
I don't get sidetracked, calling it my sister.  
I like it for being a stone,  
I like it because it feels nothing,  
I like it because it's not related to me in any way.**

**At other times I hear the wind blow,  
And I feel that it was worth being born just to hear the wind  
blow.**

**I don't know what people will think when they read this,  
But I feel it might be right since I think it without any effort  
Or any idea of what people who hear me will think,  
Because I think it without thoughts,  
Because I say it the way my words say it.**

**I was once called a materialist poet,  
And it surprised me, for I didn't think  
I could be called anything.  
I'm not even a poet: I see.  
If what I write has any value, the value isn't mine,  
It belongs to my poems.  
All this is absolutely independent of my will.**

**– Fernando Pessoa –**

writing under the heteronym Alberto Caeiro  
translated by Richard Zenith

from *A Little Larger Than the Entire Universe: Selected Poems*



## IT HAPPENS

From the book by Pablo Neruda,  
*The Sea and the Bells.*

One of the books in progress  
found in Pablo Neruda's home after his death.

They knocked on my door on the sixth of August  
nobody was standing here  
and nobody entered, sat down in a chair  
and passed the time with me, nobody.

I will never forget that absence  
that entered me like a man enters his own house,  
and I was satisfied with nonbeing:  
an emptiness open to everything.

Nobody questioned me, saying nothing,  
and I answered without seeing or speaking.

Such a spacious and specific interview!





## Sunset

- Rainer Maria Rilke

Slowly the west reaches for clothes of new colors  
which it passes to a row of ancient trees.  
You look, and soon these two worlds both leave you,  
one part climbs toward heaven, one sinks to earth,

leaving you, not really belonging to either,  
not so hopelessly dark as that house that is silent,  
not so unswervingly given to the eternal as that thing  
that turns to a star each night and climbs—

leaving you (it is impossible to untangle the threads)  
your own life, timid and standing high and growing,  
so that, sometimes blocked in, sometimes reaching out,  
one moment your life is a stone in you, and the next, a star.

*Translated by Robert Bly*  
*[Photo by Brian Erickson on Unsplash](#)*