MARY OLIVER

What is there beyond knowing that keeps  
calling to me? I can’t  
  
turn in any direction  
but it’s there. I don’t mean  
  
the leaves’ grip and shine or even the thrush’s  
silk song, but the far-off  
  
fires, for example,  
of the stars, heaven’s slowly turning  
  
theater of light, or the wind  
playful with its breath;  
  
or time that’s always rushing forward,  
or standing still  
  
in the same—what shall I say—  
*moment*.  
  
What I know  
I could put into a pack  
  
as if it were bread and cheese, and carry it  
on one shoulder,  
  
important and honorable, but so small!  
While everything else continues, unexplained  
  
and unexplainable. How wonderful it is  
to follow a thought quietly  
  
to its logical end.  
I have done this a few times.  
  
But mostly I just stand in the dark field,  
in the middle of the world, breathing  
  
in and out. Life so far doesn’t have any other name  
but breath and light, wind and rain.  
  
If there’s a temple, I haven’t found it yet.  
I simply go on drifting, in the heaven of the grass and the weeds.

MINDFUL

MARY OLIVER

Everyday  
I see or hear  
something  
that more or less

kills me  
with delight,  
that leaves me  
like a needle

in the haystack  
of light.  
It was what I was born for —  
to look, to listen,

to lose myself  
inside this soft world —  
to instruct myself  
over and over

in joy,  
and acclamation.  
Nor am I talking  
about the exceptional,

the fearful, the dreadful,  
the very extravagant —  
but of the ordinary,  
the common, the very drab,

the daily presentations.  
Oh, good scholar,  
I say to myself,  
how can you help

but grow wise  
with such teachings  
as these —  
the untrimmable light

of the world,  
the ocean’s shine,  
the prayers that are made  
out of grass?

***MYSTERIES, YES  
Mary Oliver***

***Truly, we live with mysteries too marvelous  
to be understood.  
  
How grass can be nourishing in the   
mouths of the lambs.  
How rivers and stones are forever  
in allegiance with gravity  
while we ourselves dream of rising.  
How two hands touch and the bonds will  
never be broken.  
How people come, from delight or the  
scars of damage,  
to the comfort of a poem.  
  
Let me keep my distance, always, from those  
who think they have the answers.  
  
Let me keep company always with those who say  
"Look!" and laugh in astonishment,  
and bow their heads***

SOME QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK

MARY OLIVER

Is the soul solid, like iron?

Or is it tender and breakable, like

the wings of a moth in the beak of the owl?

Who has it, and who doesn’t?

I keep looking around me.

The face of the moose is as sad

as the face of Jesus.

The swan opens her white wings slowly.

In the fall, the black bear carries leaves into the darkness.

One question leads to another.

Does it have a shape? Like an iceberg?

Like the eye of a hummingbird?

Does it have one lung, like the snake and the scallop?

Why should I have it, and not the anteater

who loves her children?

Why should I have it, and not the camel? Come to think of it, what about the maple trees?

What about the blue iris?

What about all the little stones, sitting alone in the moonlight?

What about roses, and lemons, and their shining leaves?

What about the grass?

***Albert Einstein***

*The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms— this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.*

***Albert Einstein***

*Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose.*

*From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that man is here for the sake of other men —above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellowmen, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received. My peace of mind is often troubled by the depressing sense that I have borrowed too heavily from the work of other men.*

***Albert Einstein***

A human being is part of a whole, called by us the "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest -a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPh3c8Sa37M>

*Everything is Connected -- Here's How: | Tom Chi | TEDxTaipei*

*Jan 11, 2016*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyu7v7nWzfo>

*Your brain hallucinates your conscious reality | Anil Seth TED TALK*

*July 18, 2017*

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*Dan Harris with Dr. Richard Davidson and Dalai Lama at University of Wisconsin*

*August 13, 2017*

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*Infinite Potential: The Life & Ideas of David Bohm*

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https://www.ted.com/talks/matthieu\_ricard\_the\_habits\_of\_happiness/transcript?language=en

*The habits of happiness | Matthieu Ricard   TED TALK*

*April 15, 2008*