Poems of Forgiveness

Write a poem of direct address to someone you need to forgive, or let your poem be about the power or meaning of forgiveness in general. Perhaps it is yourself you need to forgive.

A Settlement

Look, it’s spring. And last year’s loose dust has turned into this soft willingness. The wind-flowers have come up trembling, slowly the brackens are up-lifting their curvaceous and pale bodies. The thrushes have come home, none less than filled with mystery, sorrow, happiness, music, ambition.

And I am walking out into all of this with nowhere to go and no task undertaken but to turn the pages of this beautiful world over and over, in the world of my mind.

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Therefore, dark past,
I’m about to do it.
I’m about to forgive you

for everything.

Mary Oliver
in What Do We Know: Poems and Prose Poems

Thought for the Day:

The path of forgiveness
is the path of freedom.

Forgiveness is a rebellion
against the ego’s self-importance.

Ivan M. Granger
Rabbit

After a long numbness, I wake
and suddenly am noticing everything,
all of it piercing me with its beautiful,
radical trust: the carpenter bee tonguing
the needle of echinacea believing
in their sweetness, the exuberance
of an orange daylily unfolding itself
at the edge of the street, and the way
the moss knows the stone, and the stone
accepts its trespass, and the way the dog
on his leash turns to see if I’m holding on,
certain I know where to go. And the way
the baby rabbit—whose trembling ears
are the most delicate cups—trusts me,
because I pried the same dog’s jaw
off his hips, and then allows me to feed him
clover when his back legs no longer work,
forcing me to think about forgiveness
and those I need to forgive, and to hope
I am forgiven, and that just maybe
I can forgive myself. This unstoppable,
excruciating tenderness everywhere inviting
us, always inviting. And then later, the firefly
illuminating the lantern of its body,
like us, each time we laugh.

Heather Swan
in A Kinship with Ash.

Gift

Here, she said, her pockets
stuffed with forgiveness,
borrow some of mine.
I take it between my fingers
like a coin and hold it up
to see how it shines,
but I hide it quick,
almost embarrassed
to be seen with it.
All day, I touch my pocket
to be sure it’s still there.
All day I dream of ways
to spend it.

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer
in *Naked for Tea*

Sacred Grandmother,
Ancient Earth,
teach me your ways
of forgiveness.

Let simply and always
after fire or frost
all the fields and forests
of my being
spring again green,
burst into delicate
laughing flower.

Sacred Grandmother,
teach me to forgive wholly.
Teach me holy forgiveness.

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