3. Count to Three

Let today’s poem refer to three of anything (goals, definitions, doors, voices) and present them in three individual stanzas.

The Three Goals

The first goal is to see the thing itself in and for itself, to see it simply and clearly for what it is.

No symbolism, please.

The second goal is to see each individual thing as unified, as one, with all the other ten thousand things.

In this regard, a little wine helps a lot.

The third goal is to grasp the first and the second goals, to see the universal and the particular, simultaneously.

Regarding this one, call me when you get it.

David Budbill
in Moment to Moment

Three Definitions

Poetry is palpable energy held in a teacup of words.

Prayer is a flock of heart thoughts winging up into infinite sky.

God is one name for the Mystery beyond human understanding.

jch 12/10/2014
Elegy

I open the first door. It’s a large sunlit room. A heavy car passes in the street and makes the porcelain tremble.

I open door number two. Friends! You drank the darkness and became visible.


Tomas Transtromer
In *The Great Enigma*
Translated from Swedish by Robin Fulton

Ridiculous

This is ridiculous
said the literary old woman
nobody gives us any respect
the young in one another’s arms
are talking on their iPhones
the congressmen are lying through their teeth
and our husbands are watching the game

This is ridiculous
said the tulip
all those genetically altered blossoms
those stupid long-lived orchids
that are practically plastic
and those fancy designer grasses
going more than their market share

This is ridiculous
said the dog
now they not only have to walk me
they have to rush up after me with their
sanitary plastic bags
imposing their bourgeois values
on my spontaneous creativity

Alicia Suskin Ostriker
in *The Old Woman, The Tulip, and the Dog*
Language, Prayer, and Grace

Language is no more than the impressions left by birds nesting in snow.

Prayer is the path opened by a leopard leaping through the brush.

And grace is how the water parts for a fish letting it break the surface.

Mark Nepo
anthologized in How to Love the World: Poems of Gratitude and Hope edited by James Crews