5. **Give Voice to Nonhuman Things**

In your poem let a voice other than human speak. Write today’s poem in an imaginative narrative voice other than that of a human. It might be that of an animal, vegetable, or mineral. It might be fire or water or wind or lightning as below. Anything goes; just give it a voice.

**TWO VOICES IN A MEADOW**  
Richard Wilbur

**A Milkweed**

Anonymous as cherubs  
Over the crib of God,  
White seeds are floating  
Out of the burst pod.  
What power had I  
Before I learned to yield?  
Shatter me, great wind:  
I shall possess the field.

**A Stone**

As casual as cow-dung  
Under the crib of God,  
I lie where chance would have me,  
Up to the ears in sod.  
Why should I move? To move  
Befits a light desire.  
The sill of Heaven would founder,  
Did such as I aspire.  

In *Advice to a Prophet*  
and Other Poems

**Lightning**

At a decent distance  
From the heads of men  
I happen
And am gone.
This is how
I light up heaven
And define the dark.
You think I must
Be something of an exhibitionist,
A dramatic braggart of light?
I am a mere moment
Between this and that
Yet so much that moment
I
Illumine the sky
And the small homes of men,
Flash through their fears, spotlight their joys.
My deepest nature is quiet and private.
I cannot escape the noise.

Brendan Kennelly
_A Time for Voices: Selected poems 1960-1990_

WAXWINGS

Four Tao philosophers as cedar waxwings
chat on a February berrybush
in sun, and I am one.

Such merriment and such sobriety—
the small wild fruit on the tall stalk—
was this not always my true style?

Above an elegance of snow, beneath
a silk-blue sky a brotherhood of four
birds. Can you mistake us?

To sun, to feast, and to converse
and all together—for this I have abandoned
all my other lives.

Robert Francis
_anthologized in A Book of Luminous Things_
edited by Czeslaw Milosz