

The Words of a Poem

In your poem today somehow speak not just of poems but of the words themselves in poems.

Glass

Words of a poem should be glass
But glass so simple-subtle its shape
Is nothing but the shape of what it holds.

A glass spun for itself is empty,
Brittle, at best a Venetian trinket,
Embossed glass hides the poem or its absence.

Words should be looked through, should be windows.
The best words were invisible.
The poem is the thing the poet thinks.

If the impossible were not
And if the glass, only the glass,
Could be removed, the poem would remain.

Robert Francis

Words

(inspired by the dumpster outside my recently
deceased sister Ellie's condo)

I could pretend to fly
out across the world
on winged words,
but that's not true.

My words collect
as the bees do
on the fallen apples
out front.

They nibble at the day's
sweetness, buzz a bit,
arise to circle some,
then settle onto shelves

in notebooks no one
ever reads. Why so many
unspoken, merely written words
speaking self to self?

In the end
they'll all be hauled away
toward the eternal silence
of death's dumpster.

jch 9/10/2020

The Words

Wind, bird, and tree,
Water, grass, and light:
In half of what I write
Roughly or smoothly
Year by impatient year,
the same six words recur.

I have as many floors
As meadows or rivers,

As much still air as wind
And as many cats in mind
As nests in the branches
To put an end to these.

Instead, I take what is:
The light beats on the stones,
And wind over water shines
Like long grass through the trees,
As I set loose, like birds
In a landscape, the old words.

David Wagoner
in *The Poetry Anthology: Ninety Years of
America's Most Distinguished Verse
Magazine*
editors: Joseph Parisi and Stephen Young

The Poet Is Told to Fill Up More Pages

But, where are the words?
Not in my pocket.
Not in the refrigerator.
Not in my savings account.

So I sit, harassed, with my notebook.
It's a joke, really, and not a good one.
For fun I try a few commands myself.
I say to the rain, stop raining.
I say to the sun, that isn't anywhere nearby,
Come back and come fast.

Nothing happens.

So this is all I can give you,

not being the maker of what I do,
but only the one that holds the pencil.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz.
Make of it what you will.

Mary Oliver
in *Swan*