

# When Death Comes By Mary Oliver

When death comes  
like the hungry bear in autumn;  
when death comes and takes all the bright coins  
from his purse  
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;  
when death comes  
like the measles-pox;  
when death comes  
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,  
I want to step through the door full of curiosity,  
wondering:  
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?  
And therefore I look upon everything  
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,  
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,

and I consider eternity as another possibility,

and I think of each life as a flower, as common  
as a field daisy, and as singular,

and each name a comfortable music in the mouth,  
tending, as all music does, toward silence,

and each body a lion of courage, and something  
precious to the earth.

When it's over, I want to say all my life

I was a bride married to amazement.

I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my  
arms.

When it's over, I don't want to wonder

if I have made of my life something particular, and  
real.

I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,  
or full of argument.

I don't want to end up simply having visited this  
world.