

Spring
By Mary Oliver

Somewhere
 a black bear
 has risen from sleep
 and is staring

down the mountain.
 All night
 in the brisk and shallow restlessness
 of early spring

I think of her,
 her four black fists
 flicking the gravel,
 her tongue

like a red fire
 touching the grass,
 the cold water.
 There is only one question:

how to love this world.
 I think of her
 rising
 like a black and leafy ledge

to sharpen her claws against
 the silence
 of the trees.
 Whatever else

my life is
 with its poems
 and its music
 and its glass cities,

it is also this dazzling darkness
 coming
 down the mountain,
 breathing and tasting;

all day I think of her—
 her white teeth,
 her wordlessness,
 her perfect love.