



# MORNING POEM

BY MARY OLIVER

Every morning  
the world  
is created.  
Under the orange

sticks of the sun  
the heaped  
ashes of the night  
turn into leaves again

and fasten themselves to the high branches—  
and the ponds appear  
like black cloth  
on which are painted islands

of summer lilies.  
If it is your nature  
to be happy  
you will swim away along the soft trails

for hours, your imagination  
alighting everywhere.  
And if your spirit  
carries within it

the thorn  
that is heavier than lead—  
if it's all you can do  
to keep on trudging—

there is still  
somewhere deep within you  
a beast shouting that the earth  
is exactly what it wanted—

each pond with its blazing lilies  
is a prayer heard and answered  
lavishly,  
every morning,

whether or not  
you have ever dared to be happy,  
whether or not  
you have ever dared to pray.



*A spirituality ministry of the  
Wheaton Franciscans*