

# POETRY

## FIVE A.M. IN THE PINEWOODS

I'd seen  
their hoofprints in the deep  
needles and knew  
they ended the long night

under the pines, walking  
like two mute  
and beautiful women toward  
the deeper woods, so I

Got up in the dark and  
went there. They came  
slowly down the hill  
and looked at me sitting under

the blue trees, shyly  
they stepped  
closer and stared  
from under their thick lashes and  
even

nibbled some damp  
tassels of weeds. This  
is nota poem about a dream,  
though it could be.

This is a poem about the world that is  
ours, or could be.  
Finally  
One of them—I swear it!—

Would have come to my arms.  
But the other  
stamped sharp hoof in the  
pine needs like

The tap of sanity,  
and they went off together through  
the trees. When I woke  
I was alone,

I was thinking:  
so this is how you swim inward,  
So this is how you flow outward,  
so this is how

## MOCCASIN FLOWERS

All my life  
so far,  
I have loved  
more than one thing,

including the mossy hooves  
of dreams  
the spongy litter  
under the tall trees.

In spring  
the moccasin flowers  
reach for the crackling  
lick of the sun

and burn down. Sometimes,  
In the shadows,  
I see the hazy eyes,  
The lamb-lips

of oblivion,  
it's deep drowse,  
and I can imagine a new nothing  
in the universe,

the matted leaves splitting  
open, revealing  
the black planks  
of the stairs.

But all my life —so far—  
I have loved best  
how the flowers rise  
and open, how

the pink lungs of their bodies  
enter the fire of the world  
and stand there shining  
and willing—the one

thing they can do before  
they shuffle forward  
into the floor of darkness, they  
become the trees.

- from "House of Light" by Mary Oliver

# DHARMA

## Buddha's Final Teaching

"Make of yourself a light. Rely upon yourself. Do not depend upon anyone else. Make my teachings your light. Rely upon them. Do not depend on others' teachings."

-Buddha

## Practicing Patience

In Tibetan Buddhism there's a set of teachings for cultivating compassion called mind training, or *lojong*. One of the *lojong* teachings is, "Whichever of the two occurs, be patient." This means if a painful situation occurs, be patient, and if a pleasant situation occurs, be patient. We stay in the middle.

-Pema Chodron

## Metta Meditation

Metta Meditation, also known as Loving-Kindness Meditation is a practice of developing good will towards yourself and others. With each recitation of the phrases, we are expressing an intention, planting the seeds of loving wishes over and over in our heart.

You can begin the practice of lovingkindness by meditating for fifteen or twenty minutes in a quiet place. Let yourself sit in a comfortable fashion. Let your body rest and be relaxed. Let your heart be soft. Let go of any plans or preoccupations.

Begin with yourself. Breathe gently, and recite inwardly the following traditional phrases directed toward our own well-being. You begin with yourself because without loving yourself it is almost impossible to love others.

*May I be filled with lovingkindness.*

*May I be safe from inner and outer dangers.*

*May I be well in body and mind.*

*May I be peaceful and truly happy.*

Repeat these phrases over and over again, letting the feelings permeate your body and mind. When you feel you have established some stronger sense of lovingkindness for yourself, you can then expand your meditation to include others. After focusing on yourself, choose a benefactor, someone in your life who has loved and truly cared for you. Picture this person, invite them into your attention and carefully recite the same phrases.

Continue practicing by creating the exact phrases that best express your kindness and follow the way that most easily opens your heart. You can then send good will toward a friend, a neutral person and someone that is difficult for you in your life.

-Jack Kornfield