

The Swan
by Mary Oliver



Did you too see it, drifting, all night, on the black river?
Did you see it in the morning, rising into the silvery air -
an armful of white blossoms,
A perfect commotion of silk and linen as it leaned
into the bondage of its wings; a snowbank, a bank of lilies,
Biting the air with its black beak?
Did you hear it, fluting and whistling
A shrill dark music - like the rain pelting the trees
Like a waterfall knifing down the black ledges?
And did you see it, finally, just under the clouds -
A white cross streaming across the sky, its feet
Like black leaves, its wings like the stretching light of the river?
And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything?
And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for?
And have you changed your life?