

Mining for Meaning 8.24.08

The Summer Day

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean —

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I've been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon ?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

— Mary Oliver from *House of Light*

Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1990

Spring and Fall

Margaret, are you grieving

Over Goldengrove unleaving?

Leaves, like the things of man, you

With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?

Ah! As the heart grows older

It will come to such sights colder

By and by, nor spare a sigh

Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;

And yet you will weep and know why,

Now no matter, child, the name;
Sorrow's springs are the same
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 –1889)

Genesis 1. 20–24

And God said, “ Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind.

And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “ be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth”. And there was evening and there was morning the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind”. And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.