

Family Farm Defenders Poetry Corner

THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS

by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake up in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's life may be.
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.
I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and I am free.

HOW I GO TO THE WOODS

by Mary Oliver

Ordinarily, I go to the woods alone, with not a single friend,
for they are all smilers and talkers and therefore unsuitable.
I don't really want to be witnessed talking to catbirds
or hugging the old black oak tree.
I have my way of praying, as you no doubt have yours.
Besides, when I am alone, I can become invisible.
I can sit on top of a dune as motionless as an uprise of weeds,
until the foxes run by unconcerned.
I can hear the almost unhearable sound of roses singing.
If you have ever gone to the woods with me, I must love you very much.

Excerpt from "The Pandemic is Portal"

by Arundhati Roy

What is this thing that has happened to us?

It's a virus, yes. In and out of itself, it holds no moral brief. But it is definitely more than a virus...
It has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are
still racing back and forth, longing for a return to "normality", trying to stitch our future to our past and
refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it
offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves.

Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to
break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway
between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prej-
udice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind
us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to
fight for it.