

Offering

By Mark Nepo

We fist up to weather the days, though no one told us it has to be this way.

We just constrict to keep what is tender from being hurt.

If blessed we crack and are pried open anyway, til the heart

Like an oyster shows it's softness.

Opened by time, I am more fallible, more humble, able to trip more easily

Into joy

Who would have guessed that the softness between us glitters

Like the stardust that it is.

Who would have guessed that offering what is tender is what saves us.

Hurricane

By Mary Oliver

It didn't behave
like anything you had
ever imagined. The wind
tore at the trees, the rain
fell for days slant and hard.
The back of the hand
to everything. I watched
the trees bow and their leaves fall
and crawl back into the earth.
As though, that was that.
This was one hurricane
I lived through, the other one
was of a different sort, and
lasted longer. Then
I felt my own leaves giving up and
falling. *The back of the hand to
everything.* But listen now to what happened
to the actual trees;
toward the end of that summer they
pushed new leaves from their stubbed limbs.
It was the wrong season, yes,
but they couldn't stop. They
looked like telephone poles and didn't
care. And after the leaves came
blossoms. For some things
there are no wrong seasons.
Which is what I dream of for me.

Sometimes

Sometimes things don't go, after all,
from bad to worse. Some years, muscadel
faces down frost; green thrives; the crops don't fail,
sometimes a man aims high, and all goes well.

A people sometimes will step back from war;
elect an honest man; decide they care
enough, that they can't leave some stranger poor.
Some men become what they were born for.

Sometimes our best efforts do not go
amiss; sometimes we do as we meant to.
The sun will sometimes melt a field of sorrow
that seemed hard frozen; may it happen for you.

--Sheenagh Pugh

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