April

Sally Van Doren

I chart the psyche,
observing how I
force myself to speak
to you, imagining that
together we might
transform a life.

Why this need
to document change,
to reverse a mood,
to carry forward the time
when magnolias bloom?

Let's follow the itinerant we
up and over the jonquil’s back,
treading on its spilled bullion.

Forsythia

It caught my eye a while ago, lit up
against the gloom of the woods
in the corner of a wild field,
the pulsing color of caution.

And now that I have spent a little time
on this stone wall watching its fire
flare out of the earth
I begin to think about the long chronicle of forsythia
how these same flowers have blazed
through the centuries,
roused from the ground by the churning of spring.

I would rather not look around the next
corner of the year to see how this will die,
its lights going out,
its bare, arcing branches
waving like whips in the bitter wind.

So I sit facing the past,
letting my feet dangle over the wall,
beating time against stone with my heels
as the long gray clouds roll over me.

Remember how Arnold by the Channel
thought of Sophocles who must have heard
the same shore-sounds long ago,
walking by the edge of the Aegean?

Well, I am holding in the palm of my thoughts
all the others who once were stopped,
like me, by this brightness,
this sulfuric cry for help:
women in tunics, women gathered by a well,
men in feathers, men swimming by a river,
all speaking languages I will never know,
saying the different words for its color
as I feel the syllables of yellow form in my mouth
and hear the sound of yellow fill the morning air.

Billy Collins

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[I wandered lonely as a Cloud]
William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o’er Vales and Hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A Poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the shew to me had brought:
For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.
In April
James Hearst

This I saw on an April day:
Warm rain spilt from a sun-lined cloud,
A sky-flung wave of gold at evening,
And a cock pheasant treading a
dusty path
Shy and proud.

And this I found in an April field:
A new white calf in the sun at noon,
A flash of blue in a cool moss bank,
And tips of tulips promising flowers
To a blue-winged loon.

And this I tried to understand
As I scrubbed the rust from my
brightening plow:
The movement of seed in furrowed earth,
And a blackbird whistling sweet and clear
From a green-sprayed bough.
Loveliest of Trees
A. E. Housman

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.
Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.