

# Heavy

*by Mary Oliver*

That time  
I thought I could not  
go any closer to grief  
without dying

I went closer,  
and I did not die.  
Surely God  
had his hand in this,

as well as friends.  
Still, I was bent,  
and my laughter,  
as the poet said,

was nowhere to be found.  
Then said my friend Daniel,  
(brave even among lions),  
“It’s not the weight you carry

but how you carry it –  
books, bricks, grief –  
it’s all in the way  
you embrace it, balance it, carry it

when you cannot, and would not,  
put it down.”  
So I went practicing.  
Have you noticed?

Have you heard  
the laughter  
that comes, now and again,  
out of my startled mouth?

How I linger  
to admire, admire, admire  
the things of this world  
that are kind, and maybe

also troubled –  
roses in the wind,  
the sea geese on the steep waves,  
a love  
to which there is no reply?