

the Journey

Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice--
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles,
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.

But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations--
and though their melancholy
was terrible.

It was already late
enough, and a wild night
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world
determined to do
the only thing
you could do
determined to save
the only life you could save.