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| **In Blackwater Woods** |  |  |  |
| Mary Oliver

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| Look, the trees |
| are turning |
| their own bodies |
| into pillars |
|   |
| of light, |
| are giving off the rich |
| fragrance of cinnamon |
| and fulfillment, |
|   |
| the long tapers |
| of cattails |
| are bursting and floating away over |
| the blue shoulders |
|   |
| of the ponds, |
| and every pond, |
| no matter what its |
| name is, is |
|   |
| nameless now. |
| Every year |
| everything |
| I have ever learned |
|   |
| in my lifetime |
| leads back to this: the fires |
| and the black river of loss |
| whose other side |
|   |
| is salvation, |
| whose meaning |
| none of us will ever know. |
| To live in this world |
|   |
| you must be able |
| to do three things: |
| to love what is mortal; |
| to hold it |
|  |
| against your bones knowing |
| your own life depends on it; |
| and, when the time comes to let it |
| go, |
| to let it go. |

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