

Invitation by Mary Oliver



Oh do you have time  
to linger  
for a little while  
out of your busy

and very important day  
for the goldfinches  
that have gathered  
in a field of thistles

for a musical battle,  
to see who can sing  
the highest note,  
or the lowest,

or the most expressive of mirth  
or the most tender?  
Their strong, blunt beaks  
drink in the air

as they strive  
melodiously  
not for your sake  
and not for mine

and not for the sake of winning  
but for sheer delight and gratitude –  
believe us, they say,  
it is a serious thing

just to be alive  
on this fresh morning  
in this broken world  
I beg you,

do not walk by  
without pausing  
to attend to this  
rather ridiculous performance.

It could mean something.  
It could mean everything.  
It could be what Rilke meant, when he  
wrote:  
*You must change your life.*

Praying by Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be  
the blue iris, it could be  
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few  
small stones; just  
pay attention, then patch

a few words together and don't try  
to make them elaborate, this isn't  
a contest but the doorway

into thanks, and a silence in which  
another voice may speak.