

Rice

Mary Oliver

It grew in the black mud.
It grew under the tiger's orange paws.
Its stems thinner than candles, and as straight.
Its leaves like feathers of egrets, but green.
The grains cresting, wanting to burst.
Oh, blood of the tiger.

I don't want you just to sit down at the table.
I don't want you just to eat, and be content.
I want you to walk out into the fields
where the water is shining, and the rice has risen.
I want you to stand there, far from the white tablecloth.
I want you to fill your hands with mud, like a blessing.

Oranges

Mary Oliver

Cut one, the lace of acid
rushes out, spills over your hands.
You lick them, manners don't come into it.
Orange—the first word you have heard that day—

enters your mind. Everybody then
does what he or she wants—breakfast is casual.
Slices, quarters, halves, or the whole hand
holding an orange ball like the morning sun

on a day of soft wind and no clouds
which it so often is. “Oh, I always
want to live like this,
flying up out of the furrows of sleep,

fresh from water and its sheer excitement,
felled as though by a miracle
at this first sharp taste of the day!
You're shouting, but no one is surprised.

Here, there, everywhere on the earth
thousands are rising and shouting with you—
even those who are utterly silent, absorbed—
their mouths filled with such sweetness.