**Dawn Aubade**

**By Laura Foley**

If I hadn’t hopped aboard the ferry  
on a rough sea day

stayed outside  
in the wind and spray

letting the salt sea bless me  
with its holy water

If I hadn’t absorbed the surf’s  
tumbling up and down  
bending my knees in a trance-like dance

hadn’t waited for the moon to rise  
dripping orange globe  
lifting spirits in the east

nor felt the waves keeping my bones awake  
through all my dreaming

If I hadn’t risen at dawn to see  
the bay’s beckoning stillness  
flaming sun rising from it

If I hadn’t plunged into bracing waters  
without thought  
clothes piled on sand like a cast-off shell

could I say I had lived, at all?

["A Perfect Arc" on The Writer's Almanac](https://www.lauradaviesfoley.com/poems/2019/3/23/a-perfect-arc-on-the-writers-almanac)

*March 23, 2019*

**A Perfect Arc**  
by Laura Davies Foley

I remember the first time he dove.  
He was five and we were at a swimming pool  
and I said: you tip your head down as you are going in,  
while your feet go up.  
And then his lithe little body did it exactly right,

a perfect dive, sliding downward, arcing without a wave,  
and I just stood  
amazed and without words  
as his blond head came up again  
and today

I watched him for the longest time as he walked  
firm and upright along the street,  
with backpack, guitar, all he needs,  
blossoming outward in a perfect arc,  
a graceful turning  
away from me.

“A Perfect Arc” by Laura Davies Foley from *Syringa*. © StarMeadow Press, 2007. Reprinted with permission.

Then

The human world

kicks you in the head

again and again –

so you must seek beyond the NO,

the song of dried beech leaves

ringing in the brittle wind,

a hollow tone to shiver you

like a tuning fork,

so the healing bell inside yourself

will resound, in quietness,

with **Yes**

and **Yes** and **Yes**.

It Matters

That Mary Oliver *woke early*,

And walked along the bay, as morning sun

*tore the sheets of darkness* from the sky.

It matters that she carried a notebook,

And cared to look into a kingfisher’s soul,

to dig in wet sand for clams,

in which she later tasted the salt sea,

*erupting in her mouth*, like sex-

that *she let the soft body of her body love*

*what it loved*, which was Molly.

It matters that she loved a woman.

It matters that we each wake

to stride our own snow dunes,

finding in each day something of value,

even the last ash leaf hanging on a winter limb,

shivering a bit, then falling into stillness,

*over and over to lose ourselves*

*into something larger,*

something better. It matters that I clutch

my stack of her books-those fields of light-

now that her body has gone

into the *cottage of darkness*.

**It is Time**

By Laura Davies Foley

It is time to gather sticks of wood

so we can cook the sap that we have drawn from the earth.

We will bore holes into the maple trees,

collect buckets, stir the froth as it boils.

Then we’ll finish it on the stove in the barn.

We will do this together,

balancing the heavy iron vat,

pouring the hot syrup,

tasting the sweetness.

We did it through the pregnancies, the births.

Let’s do it once again.

And then we will cultivate the honey bees

and tend to the alfalfa in the fields.

It will be the best of times once more,

fourteen loads of fresh hay,

and my hair will be long and we will collect raspberries,

and make a pie.

The garden will yield a bumper crop of beets and basil,

and we will split wood all fall,

and stack it,

and be ready for the winter,

when you will weave a blanket on your loom

with dog hair and horse hair and my hair

and some dyed wool too.

And I will nurse the babies by the fire,

and neither of us will grow older,

and we will never forget,

and nothing will ever die.

We need to gather sticks now

and build a fire quickly,

before the season passes on,

before the field,

where you are sleeping,

blossoms.