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Recitation: After Mary Oliver

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Recitation

After Mary Oliver

April sun
melts the last snow,
warms what flows
upward, outward,
teasing buds
from the ends
of limbs.

Ivory-colored sacs
filled with eggs
float toward
the surface
of a vernal
pond.

Maple blossoms
pink the sides
of the mountain,
and soon serviceberry
will white the hollows.

At dusk we walk
to the edge
of the alder swamp
where frog song
envelops us.

For a moment
our presence
silences the wood
frogs, spring peepers,
even the water
that flows endlessly
toward the river.

I think of you,
your voice
disappearing.

When the frogs chorus
again, in the green
leaves of a black
willow the shape
of a heron tries to land.

Watching the bird's
spindly legs and broad
wings walk the air,
you ask what it means
to perch, to hold
still for a time,
then fly away?

Todd Davis

TODD DAVIS, a frequent contributor to *Appalachia* over the past decade, is the author of six books of poetry, most recently *Native Species* (2019) and *Winterkill* (2016), both published by Michigan State University Press. He teaches environmental studies at Pennsylvania State University's Altoona College.