

# Words of Joy

*Join Poet in Residence, Christine Moore, for a guided conversation about the love in our lives, the journeys we've taken and the power of joy in our days.*

This will be a breakout gathering where poetry becomes a doorway to your own memories. Simple, beautiful poems will inspire conversation, laughter, and reflection. You'll be invited to share stories from your own life and reflect on the lessons of the retreat.

No writing or poetry experience needed—just your presence and your voice.

## **A Brief for the Defense**

By Jack Gilbert

Sorrow everywhere. Slaughter everywhere. If babies are not starving someplace, they are starving somewhere else. With flies in their nostrils. But we enjoy our lives because that's what God wants. Otherwise the mornings before summer dawn would not be made so fine. The Bengal tiger would not be fashioned so miraculously well. The poor women at the fountain are laughing together between the suffering they have known and the awfulness in their future, smiling and laughing while somebody in the village is very sick. There is laughter every day in the terrible streets of Calcutta, and the women laugh in the cages of Bombay. If we deny our happiness, resist our satisfaction, we lessen the importance of their deprivation. We must risk delight. We can do without pleasure, but not delight. Not enjoyment. We must have the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless furnace of this world. To make injustice the only measure of our attention is to praise the Devil. If the locomotive of the Lord runs us down, we should give thanks that the end had magnitude. We must admit there will be music despite everything. We stand at the prow again of a small ship anchored late at night in the tiny port looking over to the sleeping island: the waterfront is three shuttered cafés and one naked light burning. To hear the faint sound of oars in the silence as a rowboat comes slowly out and then goes back is truly worth all the years of sorrow that are to come.

## **All the Stars in All the Galaxies**

By Christine Moore

There is no complete darkness.  
No complete darkness.  
No complete dark.  
No completeness without dark.  
Within the darkest dark matter there are particles of light.

There is no complete pain.  
No complete pain.  
No completeness without facing our pain.  
Within the darkest dark pain there are particles of love.  
Within love, there is a healing space for pain.

A healing space for pain.  
Love has room enough to heal pain.  
Within the loving most love there are particles of pain.

Within the brightest bright light there are particles of darkness

Light into light into light  
Love into love into love  
Dark into dark into dark  
Pain into pain into pain  
Pain into light into dark into love

Infinite unity. It is our destination and it is love that lights the way.

## The Summer Day

by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean —

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down —

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?