

I Looked Up

I stood willingly and gladly in the characters of everything
- other people, trees, clouds.
And this is what I learned,
that the world's otherness is antidote to confusion
- that standing within this otherness
- the beauty and the mystery of the world,
out in the fields or deep inside books -
can re-dignify the worst-stung heart.

~ Mary Oliver

by [Mary Oliver](#)

*I looked up and there it was
among the green branches of the pitchpines –*

*thick bird,
a ruffle of fire trailing over the shoulders and down the
back –*

*color of copper, iron, bronze –
lighting up the dark branches of the pine.*

*What misery to be afraid of death.
What wretchedness, to believe only in what can be proven.*

*When I made a little sound
it looked at me, then it looked past me.*

Then it rose, the wings enormous and opulent,

and, as I said, wreathed in fire.