

## **"The Meadow" by Marie Howe**

As we walk into words that have waited for us to enter them, so the meadow, muddy with dreams, is gathering itself together

and trying, with difficulty, to remember how to make wildflowers. Imperceptibly heaving with the old impatience, it knows

for certain that two horses walk upon it, weary of hay. The horses, sway-backed and self important, cannot design

how the small white pony mysteriously escapes the fence every day. This is the miracle just beyond their heavy-headed grasp,

and they turn from his nuzzling with irritation. Everything is crying out. Two crows, rising from the hill, fight

and caw-cry in mid-flight, then fall and light on the meadow grass bewildered by their weight. A dozen wasps drone, tiny prop planes,

sputtering into a field the farmer has not yet plowed, and what I thought was a phone, turned down and ringing,

is the knock of a woodpecker for food or warning, I can't say. I want to add my cry to those who would speak for the sound alone.

But in this world, where something is always listening, even murmuring has meaning, as in the next room you moan

in your sleep, turning into late morning. My love, this might be all we know of forgiveness, this small time when you can forget

what you are. There will come a day when the meadow will think suddenly, water, root, blossom, through no fault of its own, and the horses will lie down in daisies and clover. Bedeviled, human, your plight, in waking, is to choose from the words

that even now sleep on your tongue, and to know that tangled among them and terribly new is the sentence that could change your life.