

# Testimonial

By Rita Dove

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5      Back when the earth was new  
and heaven just a whisper,  
back when the names of things  
hadn't had time to stick;

10     back when the smallest breezes  
melted summer into autumn,  
when all the poplars quivered  
sweetly in rank and file . . .

15     the world called, and I answered.  
Each glance ignited to a gaze.  
I caught my breath and called that life,  
swooned between spoonfuls of lemon sorbet.

20     I was pirouette and flourish,  
I was filigree and flame.  
How could I count my blessings  
when I didn't know their names?

25     Back when everything was still to come,  
luck leaked out everywhere.  
I gave my promise to the world,  
and the world followed me here.