

The Real Prayers Are Not the Words, But the Attention that Comes First

by Mary Oliver

5 The little hawk leaned sideways and, tilted,
rode the wind. Its eye at this distance looked
like green glass; its feet were the color
of butter. Speed, obviously, was joy. But
then, so was the sudden, slow circle it carved
into the slightly silvery air, and the
squaring of its shoulders, and the pulling into
itself the sharp-edged wings, and the
10 falling into the grass where it tussled a moment,
like a bundle of brown leaves, and then, again,
lifted itself into the air, that butter-color
clenched in order to hold a small, still
body, and it flew off as my mind sang out oh
15 all that loose, blue rink of sky, where does
it go to, and why?