

MOTH

*Is the soul solid, like iron?
Or is it tender and breakable, like
the wings of a moth in the beak of the owl?*

--Mary Oliver

I had the idea that if it happens
early enough, when the soul
is still forming
(it happened when I was getting
my soul),
it's like a leaf that is stamped
and as the leaf grows
it retains that imprint,
so that part of it is not its own.

You said, *your soul is whole and clean*,
but then why does it feel
like it belongs to someone else,
that child waiting quietly in bed
for him to come in and say goodnight?

Wouldn't a real soul
have gotten up and walked out?
Into the black trees, the lake,
even if it was cold.
But like a human it craved warmth,
predictability.