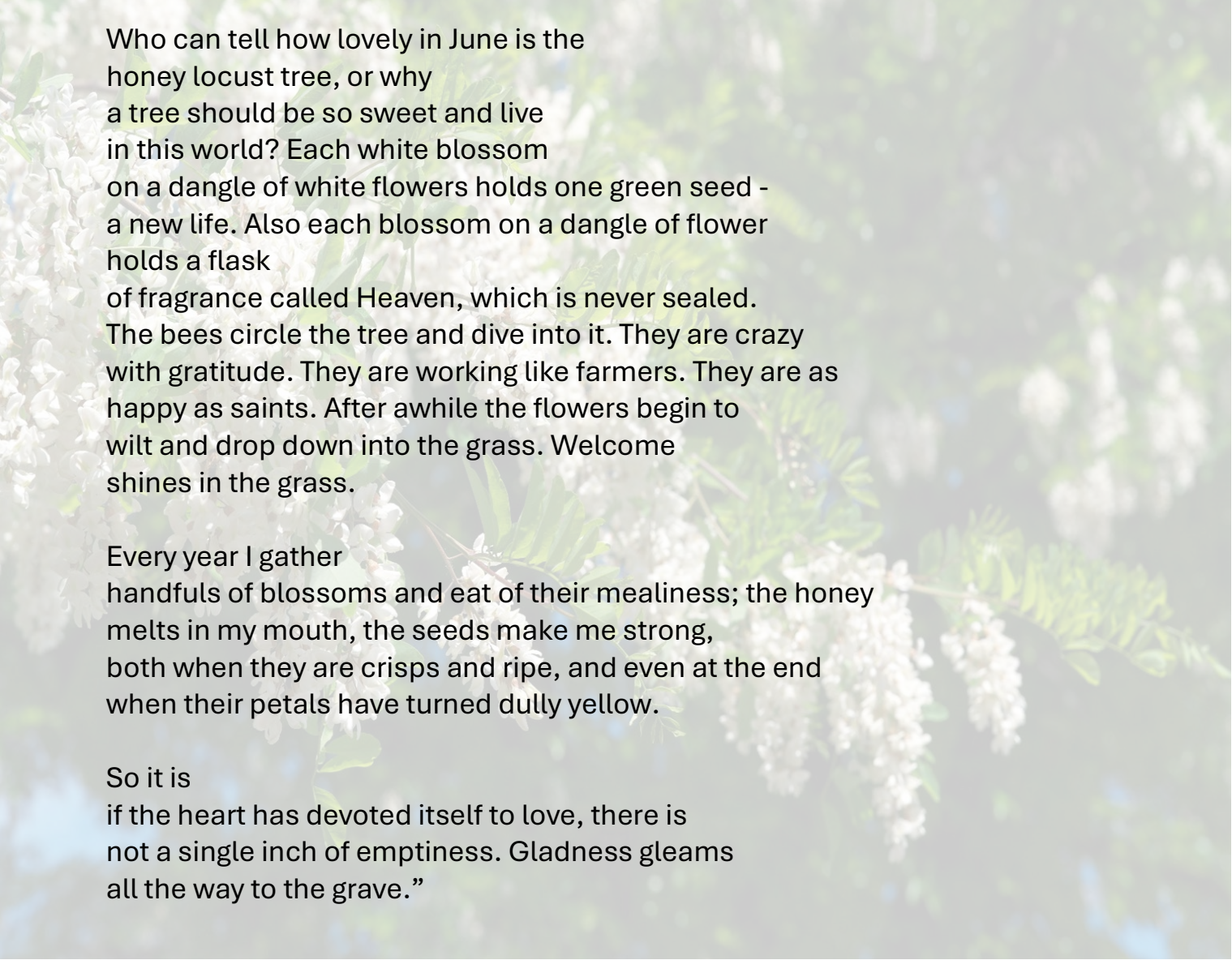


June 17

“Honey Locust”, by Mary Oliver

Mary Oliver, *New and Selected Poems*, Vol. 2



Who can tell how lovely in June is the
honey locust tree, or why
a tree should be so sweet and live
in this world? Each white blossom
on a dangle of white flowers holds one green seed -
a new life. Also each blossom on a dangle of flower
holds a flask
of fragrance called Heaven, which is never sealed.
The bees circle the tree and dive into it. They are crazy
with gratitude. They are working like farmers. They are as
happy as saints. After awhile the flowers begin to
wilt and drop down into the grass. Welcome
shines in the grass.

Every year I gather
handfuls of blossoms and eat of their mealiness; the honey
melts in my mouth, the seeds make me strong,
both when they are crisps and ripe, and even at the end
when their petals have turned dully yellow.

So it is
if the heart has devoted itself to love, there is
not a single inch of emptiness. Gladness gleams
all the way to the grave.”