

Beginners

*'From too much love of living,
Hope and desire set free,
Even the weariest river
Winds somewhere to the sea-'*

*But we have only begun
to love the earth.*

*We have only begun
to imagine the fullness of life.*

*How could we tire of hope?
~ so much is in bud.*

*How can desire fail?
~ we have only begun*

*to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision*

*how it might be
to live as siblings with beast and flower,
not as oppressors.*

*Surely our river
cannot already be hastening
into the sea of nonbeing?*

*Surely it cannot
drag, in the silt,
all that is innocent?*

*Not yet, not yet ~
there is too much broken
that must be mended,*

*too much hurt we have done to each other
that cannot yet be forgiven*

*We have only begun to know
the power that is in us if we would join
our solitudes in the communion of struggle*

*So much is unfolding that must
complete its gesture*

so much is in bud.

~ Denise Levertov

(Dedicated to the memory of Karen Silkwood and Eliot Gralla)