

Epiphany / Turning 50

Whoever said there is a time and a place for everything never heard you sing. Clocks are a curious breed. Admire their charming faces—don't fall for their finger-pointing, tick-tock idiolect. When they stop, respect their silent creed. Shun the rudeness of alarms. Accept that it is morning because of birds. Make time to hear their songs.

There will be no 8 p.m, no afternoon, no term at school, no conference at half past five, no schedule for *Zoom*. Take your own sweet time. In this new age, deadlines fail to make themselves known. Breathe in. Breathe out. Pay no mind to those who preach the gospel of seizing days, any who warn you that time is marching on. Procrastination is the new

*tempus fugit*, so nap till you are done, wander to work refreshed. Take the scenic route past the church or canal. Arrive in mended mental health, do the best job you can. Surprise yourself with your calm efficiency. Feel no pressure to rush a colleague or customer past. Give each the time they deserve. We are more than numbers. Time is not money.

You are halfway through your life, have half a lifetime left. You cannot buy back time you lost. Hire a rowing boat indefinitely – nobody will ever say *come in number 6* again. Your time is not up. You are already there, have never been. It is not time to go home. It is not time to leave. Come when you're ready. Go when you've had

enough. There will be a train at some point. Three trains at once. Buses are a law unto themselves. Treat life as a quest. You're the hero who made it home. Surprise yourself with a dandelion gone to seed. Blow, blow, blow. It won't help you tell the time. Just enjoy the childlike happiness. Chat as you share a steaming pot of tea, or don't. Make conversation. Relish

the quiet. You can meet or not meet any time you wish. Look askance at notions of lunch. Forget to make soup. Noon is a four letter word in a stranger's mouth. Don't bother with the kitchen timer. Judge a loaf by your nose—learn to trust your own skill. Don't make meals by rote. Guess your stomach by changes of light. Supper will never

be a loneliness of toast. Discover peace when you stop killing time. *Dear To-Whom-It-May-Concern, I will / will not be attending your ? due to a surplus of unplanned hours.* You can't get any older if you stop time in its tracks. Go to the beach and feast on salty air, be reminded of how time and tide wait for no-one. Make up for lost time.

Roll up your trousers. Slip off your socks. Stay out much too late. Who is midnight anyway? Question the relevance of sleep. Consider how often you were told time is a great healer. Advice tastes best with buttered crumpets. Accept that time has made a mockery of your waist. Read a bedtime story to someone, a loved one, definitely yourself.