

## ***SELF-PORTRAIT***

*It doesn't interest me if there is one God  
or many gods.  
I want to know if you belong or feel  
abandoned.  
If you know despair or can see it in others.  
I want to know  
if you are prepared to live in the world  
with its harsh need  
to change you. If you can look back  
with firm eyes  
saying this is where I stand. I want to know  
if you know  
how to melt into that fierce heat of living  
falling toward  
the center of your longing. I want to know  
if you are willing  
to live, day by day, with the consequence of love  
and the bitter unwanted passion of your sure defeat.  
I have been told, in that fierce embrace, even  
the gods speak of God.*

*FIRE IN THE EARTH*  
David Whyte